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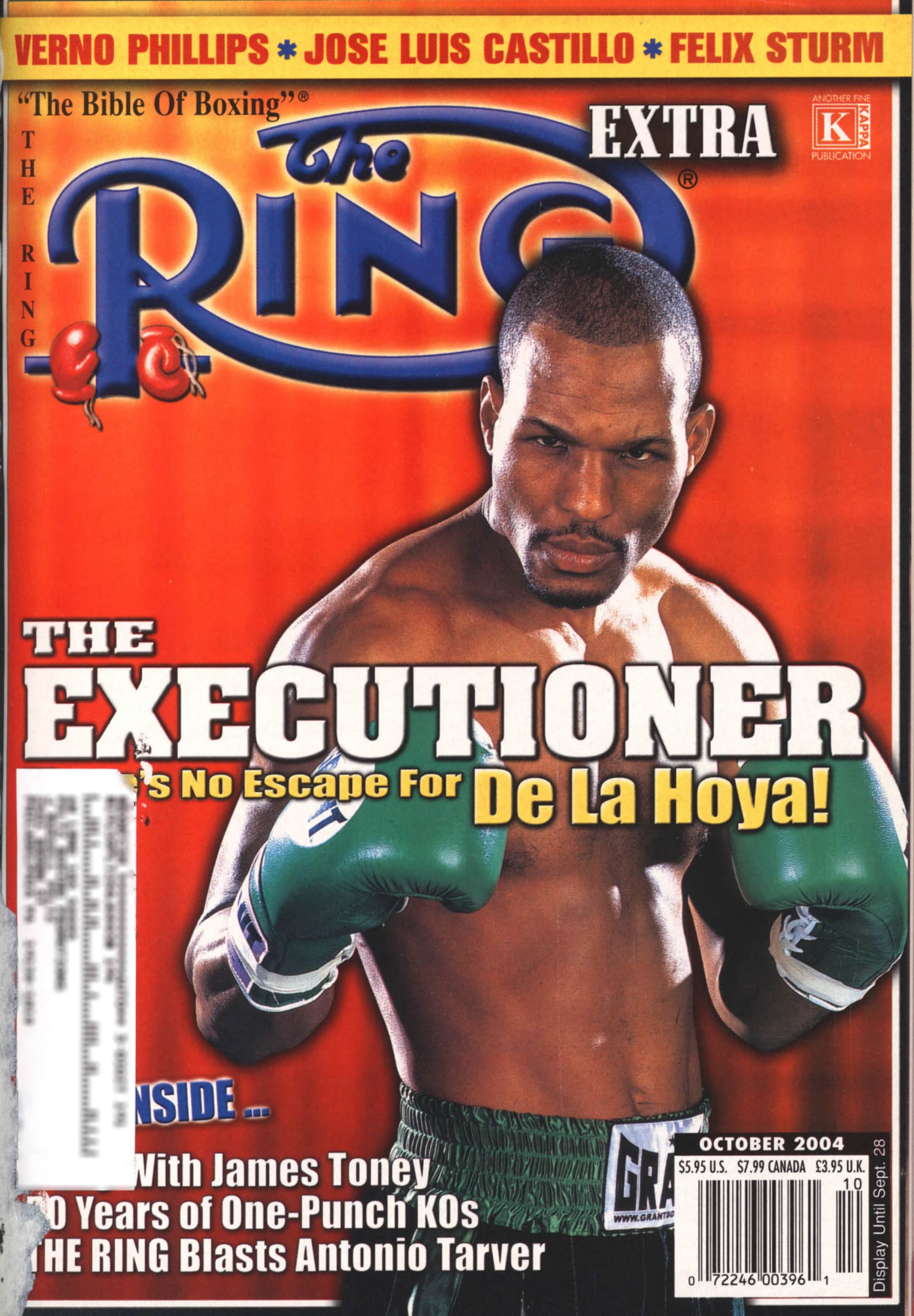

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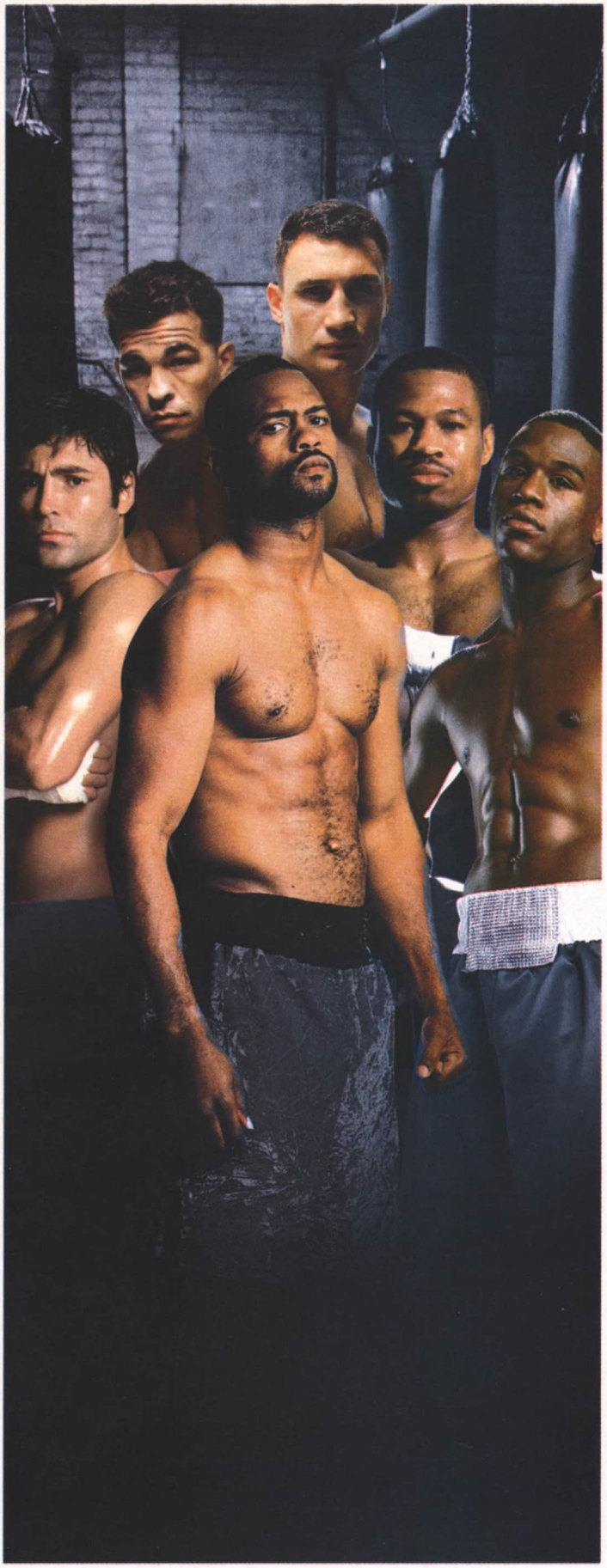

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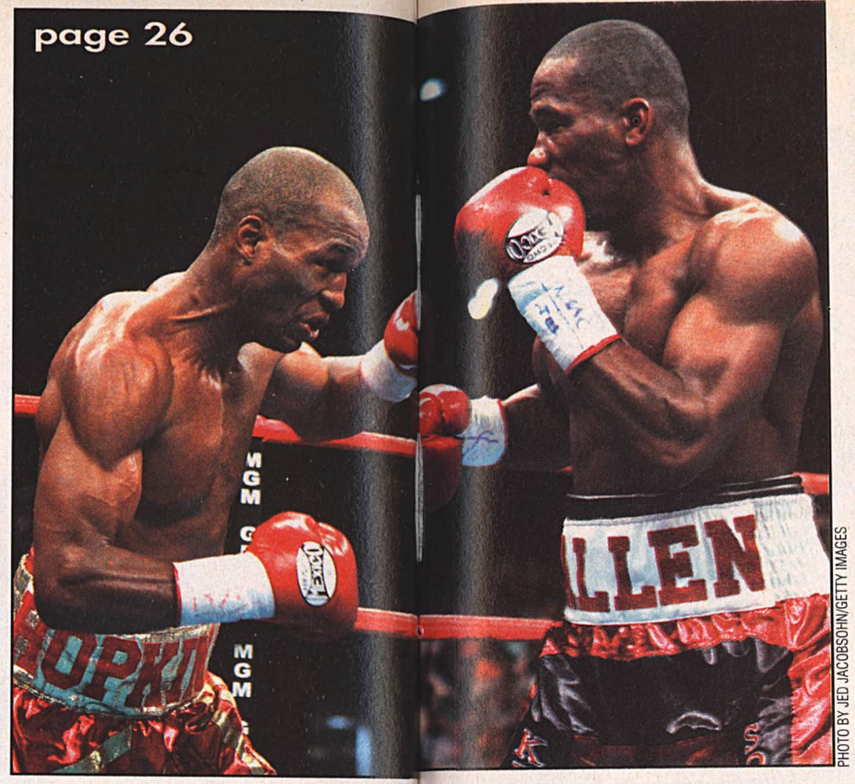

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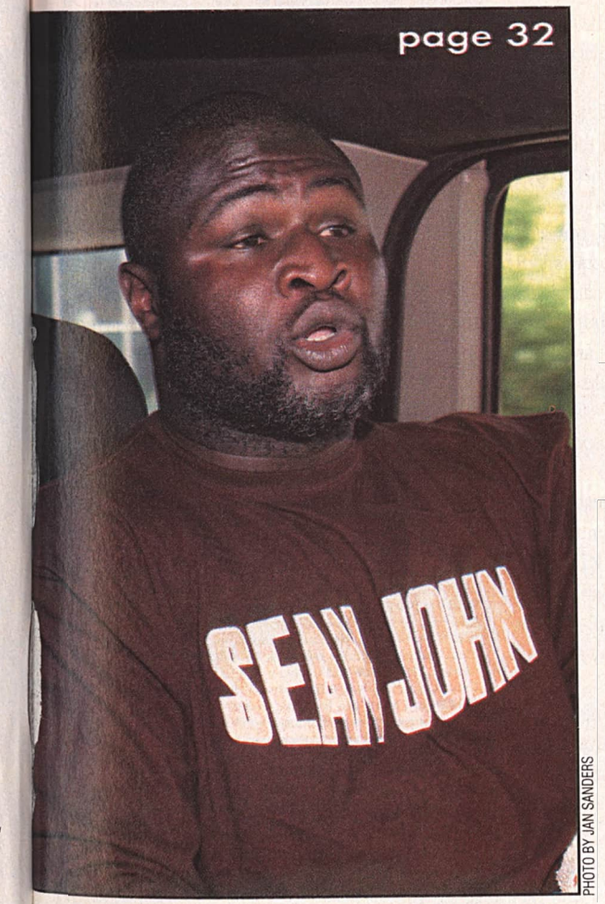

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RINGSIDE

The big day THE RING and millions of boxing fans have long awaited is at hand. The WBC is dead, done in by its own skullduggery and the $31-million judgment awarded Graciano Rocchigiani by a U.S. District Court jury, which decided the organization had wrongly deprived the German boxer of its light heavyweight title.

Nonetheless, my elation at the demise of this parasitic band of scoundrels is tempered somewhat by a sadly misguided statement issued by light heavyweight champion Antonio Tarver, in which he praised the WBC and offered to give Rocchigiani a shot at the title if "that small gesture on my part can help bring life back to the green and gold, the belt that I wear with pride and dignity."

Hey, if Tarver wants to fight a guy who has lost five of his last nine bouts, and hasn't fought at all since dropping a 12-rounder to Thomas Ulrich in May 2003, he certainly has a right to do so. But such a mismatch isn't going to bring back the WBC, whose president, Jose Sulaiman, has instructed its legal counsel to file Chapter 7 bankruptcy liquidation proceedings.

I think I understand where Tarver is coming from: He grew up watching his favorite fighters sporting WBC hardware and probably dreamed of the day when he too could have a belt just like the one his heroes wore. Moreover, as he said in his statement, Tarver was very appreciative when the WBC ordered an immediate rematch with Roy Jones following their close initial encounter.

But apparently, Tarver has a poor grasp of history and a foggy view of the big picture. What makes him think that the WBC wouldn't turn around and screw him the way it did Rocchigiani?

It's not like the Rocchigiani case was the first incident where the WBC's actions were detrimental to the sport. Sulaiman and his cohorts have been screwing the Sweet Science for decades. Remember when Sulaiman originally refused to recognize Buster Douglas as heavyweight champion after he knocked out Mike Tyson in Tokyo?

We don't have space here to give a blow-by-blow account of every WBC misdeed. But when the organization's trespasses attract the attention of such heavy hitters as U.S. Senators John McCain and Richard H. Bryan—as it did in 2000 when the senators sent a letter of censure to Sulaiman because he tried to force the Indiana Boxing Commission to replace one judge with a judge sponsored by the WBC—you know things are pretty serious. In part, the letter read, "... this incident presents yet another example that the organizations which rank boxers for a fee often undermine the sport."

It's all part of what Tarver calls the WBC's "long and distinguished history." Give me a break!

I appreciate the fact that many of the WBC titleholders will be left beltless by the organization's bankruptcy, but the truth of the matter is that most of them weren't genuine champions in the first place. Those who are legitimate champions, Vitali Klitschko, Bernard Hopkins, Winky Wright, Cory Spinks, Kostya Tszyu, Jose Luis Castillo, and Tarver, don't have to worry about it; they have THE RING belt, which not only makes them immune to any alphabet organization's meddling, it doesn't cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars each year in sanctioning fees.

Wise up everybody. A new day has dawned for boxing. If Tarver, a genuinely good guy who's been a breath of fresh air, and the rest of the boxing industry don't take advantage of this opportunity, they'll have only themselves to blame when they end up neck deep in the same sort of crap the WBC used to dish up before it all came crashing down on them.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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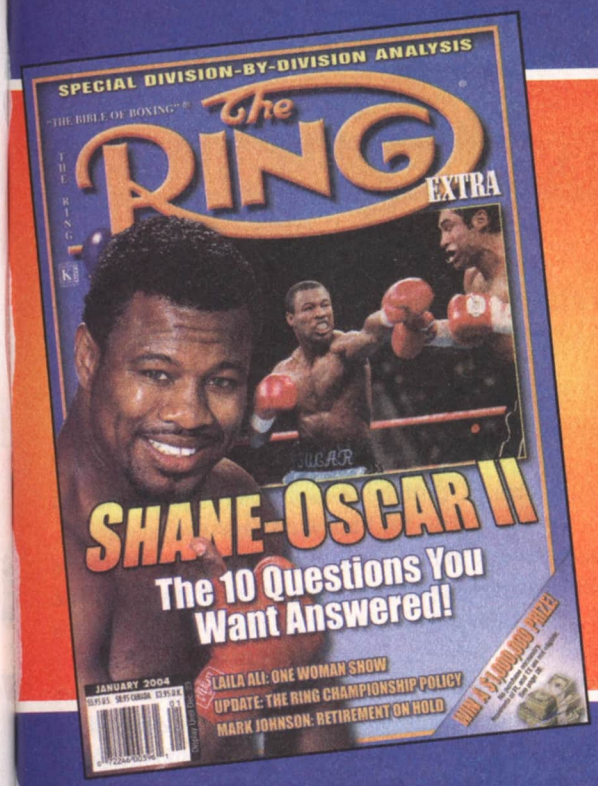

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ROUND ONE

ANOTHER WEEKEND IN BOXING HEAVEN

Even a cloudburst during the induction ceremony couldn't dampen the enthusiasm of fighters and fans alike during the 15th annual International Boxing Hall of Fame induction weekend in Canastota, New York—or, as some have christened the small village in upstate New York, "Boxing Heaven."

Thankfully, until the summer shower sent spectators outside of the pavilion scurrying for cover, the weather had been perfect. Fans enjoyed a variety of events ranging from a 5K run (a very fit looking Daniel Zaragoza finished first among the participating boxers) and golf tournament, to more sedate activities such as ringside talks by various boxers, celebrity workouts, autograph sessions, the Banquet of Champions, and much more.

Newly minted light heavyweight champion Antonio Tarver was probably the most popular active fighter in attendance, and he delighted onlookers during a public workout by demonstrating how he threw the left hand that knocked out Roy Jones. But as always, it was the heroes of the past who were the main focal point.

Former featherweight and junior lightweight titleholder Azumah Nelson threw a bit of a scare into the proceedings when several flight delays meant that he didn't arrive from his native Ghana until late Saturday night. But "The Professor," wearing a conservative business suit, sporting a gray beard, and looking more like a United Nations delegate than an ex-pug, was on hand for Sunday's Parade of Champions and the induction ceremony later that afternoon.

Historian Herb Goldman read the list of deceased inductees in a rapid-fire delivery reminiscent of an old-time radio announcer. They were boxers Baby Arizmendi, Young Corbett III, Billy Edwards, Jackie Fields, and Willie Ritchie, manager Umberto Branchini, promoter Lou Viscusi, and writer Barney Nagler.

All of the living inductees in attendance, Dwight Muhammad Qawi, Carlos Palomino, Nelson, Zaragoza, J Russell Peltz, and Stanley Christodoulou (writer W.C. Heinz was represented by his daughter) gave heartfelt acceptance speeches. Palomino fought back tears throughout his comments, Nelson spoke so softly you could hardly hear him, and Qawi was very insightful explaining how his induction had brought him closure. It was, however, normally restrained promoter Peltz who stole the show with a wonderful speech that was both poignant and funny.

"There was a Broadway play in the early-'60s called, 'Stop The World I Want To Get Off,'" said Peltz. "That's how I felt Thursday, when I got here. I stopped the world and got off at Canastota. Frankly, I don't want to go back."

It was a sentiment shared by virtually all as the weekend wound down and everybody headed home. But, hey, when it comes to the IBHOF, there's always next year.

—Nigel Collins

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Qawi, Peltz, Nelson, Zaragoza, Palomino, and Christodoulou show off their rings

CASTING CALLS FOR *CHAMP & CONTENDER*

PHOTO BY WILL HART/FOX

Ward works the pads with contestant 612 at the* Next Great Champ *tryout

Some of them showed up for their workouts wearing blue jeans. Some of them appeared to be looking at speedbags and double-end bags for the first time in their lives. One was 50 years old, another was a former title challenger, and yet another had retired from professional boxing more than a decade ago.

The goal of upcoming reality television shows *The Next Great Champ* and *The Contender* is to find boxing's answer to Kelly Clarkson and Ruben Studdard. But at the tryouts this past spring, in addition to seeing promising, young fighters who could potentially end up on FOX or NBC vying for prize money and a pro contract, those on hand also got a glimpse at boxing's answers to William Hung. There were "fighters" who boxed about as well as Hung sings (ironic that he found fame by singing "She Bangs," while so many of his pugilistic counterparts could barely even bang an inanimate object), and there were others who were just too old and/or experienced to possibly fit the mold.

But all were welcome to try out, as long as they were male, met the minimum age requirements, and fell into the desired weight range. THE RING was on hand at the Joe Hand Boxing Club in Philadelphia to check out the hopeful and the hopeless. On April 29, FOX's *The Next Great Champ*, which will star Oscar De La Hoya, rolled into Philly, and five weeks later, on June 4, NBC's *The Contender*, which has Sylvester Stallone, Ray Leonard, George Foreman, reality-TV mastermind Mark Burnett, and Dreamworks' Jeffrey Katzenberg behind it, arrived.

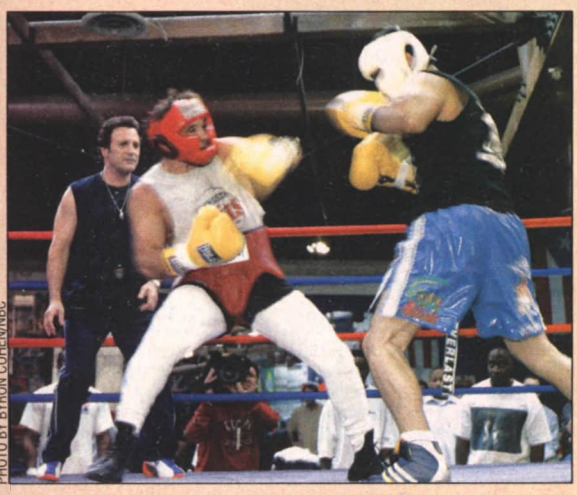


PHOTO BY BYRON COHEN/NBC

Frank Stallone observers a* Contender*-tryout sparring match

Considering that both shows seem to be looking for roughly the same qualities in their cast members, it was noteworthy how different the casting calls were. For *Champ*, Frank Ward and Carlos Figueroa, two regular trainers at Joe Hand, oversaw the boxing end, watching each fighter show his skills for two minutes on the double-end bag, two minutes on the heavybag, and two minutes on the speedbag. If he passed that test, he got in the ring and hit the pads, held by Ward, for two minutes. If he again proved adequate, it was off to a private room to be interviewed by Head Casting Director Billy Kemp.

"I don't consider myself a boxing specialist at all," said Kemp, who has helped cast such shows as *The Next Action Star* and *Temptation Island*. "I'm here to evaluate if they have a good personality, if they're a good talker. I just ask a few basic questions about their background, and then if they make it to the call-back day, that includes a much more extensive interview."

For *Contender*, which drew a significantly larger crowd of hopefuls in Philly, there was no hitting bags or pads. Instead, fighters were paired up with other fighters around their weight and sent into the ring for three-minute sparring sessions, which typically were entertaining enough to make everyone else in the gym put their warm-up routines on hold to watch. Kronk Gym veteran Prentiss Byrd (in some other cities, Frank Stallone did Byrd's job) then decided who was worthy of an interview with fellow Casting Supervisor Michelle McNulty.

"I could hit a bag like nobody's business, but if you put me in the ring, I'll get killed," said Byrd, suggesting his show's methods were more effective than the competition's. "After I'm done, it's Michelle's job to determine if they have the personality. I've seen some fighters who really impressed me, but got sent home after their interview. You really have to have the whole package to get on this show."

Which show will end up with the superior cast? Which will be the more entertaining show? *Champ* is slated to begin airing in the fall, *Contender* in the winter, and hopefully both will deliver bang for the buck, not "She Bangs" for the buck.

—Eric Raskin

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
5-28-04	Tarvis Simms KO 10 Jameel Wilson	ESPN2	m	C	B	C
Ever notice you never see Tarvis, Travis, and Martin Lawrence in the same place at the same time?						
5-28-04	Derrick Harmon W 10 David Telesco	ESPN2	lh	B-	B+	C+
No David, we can't understand either why HBO hasn't signed you yet to a long-term contract; what are they thinking?						
5-28-04	Eric Regan W 12 Pedro Ortega	Telef	m	C	B+	C+
As far as rubber matches go, it wasn't exactly the Thrilla, but Regan will take it						
6-3-04	Jorge Martinez W 12 Carlos Ramirez	Show	f	C+	C+	B
Hey ref, you can take a point from a guy after you've warned him 300 times						
6-3-04	Robert Guerrero KO 8 Enrique Sanchez	Show	f	B-	B-	C
Some perspective: Guerrero looked good, but Sanchez hasn't won an important fight in six years						
6-4-04	Cuauhtemoc Vargas KO 7 Erik Rodriguez	ESPN2	jf	C+	A	C+
This looked like an even fight until Vargas stopped posing and started punching						
6-4-04	Brian Viloria KO 11 Gilberto Keb-Baas	ESPN2	fl	B	B	C+
Viloria one of the more improved guys around; looks to us like he's as ready for a title shot as he'll ever be						
6-5-04	**Jose Luis Castillo W 12 Juan Lazcano**	**PPV**	**World l**	**A**	**A**	**B+**
See what happens when everyone forgets about a good, strong guy like Castillo?						
6-5-04	**Bernard Hopkins W 12 Robert Allen**	**PPV**	**World m**	**A+**	**C-**	**C-**
The real question now is, what the hell do you do if you're Allen? What's the point?						
6-5-04	Oscar De La Hoya W 12 Felix Sturm	PPV	m	A+	C	B
When we heard Sturm was fighting an HBO star, we thought they meant Oscar De La Hoya, not Bobby Bacala						
6-5-04	Jeff Lacy No-Contest 2 Vitali Tsypko	Show	sm	B-	C+	D
Just as well for Tsypko, whose long-term cognitive health gets a big break with early stoppage						
6-5-04	**Verno Phillips KO 6 Carlos Bojorquez**	**Show**	**IBF jm**	**A-**	**C-**	**C+**
Take nothing away from Phillips, but isn't Bojorquez fighting for a "world" title a little silly?						
6-8-04	Kendrick Releford W 10 Ramon Garbey	ESPN2	h	C-	B-	C
Sorry, Ramon, Ding Dongs and Ho-Hos are not their own food groups						
6-8-04	Dale Brown W 12 Robert Daniels	ESPN2	c	B-	C+	B-
Solid win for Brown, who we get the sense will always be good enough to lose to just the top guys						
6-11-04	Troy Rowland W 10 Kenny Ellis	ESPN2	sm	C	B	C+
Anyone else feel suddenly old seeing Greg Haugen in the corner instead of in the center of the ring?						
6-11-04	Daniel Ponce-DeLeon W 10 Carlos Contreras	Telef	f	C+	B	C+
We still don't know quite what to make of Ponce-DeLeon, but at least we know he can punch hard for 10 rounds						
6-11-04	Oscar Larios W 10 Jesus Perez	Telef	jl	B+	D+	B-
Isn't it fun when these stay-busy, non-title affairs get dicey? Perez made this interesting						
6-15-04	Chris Thomas KO 2 Rich LaMontagne	ESPN2	c	C	B+	B+
Upset! Was that Michael Bennett we saw giggling at ringside?						
6-15-04	Jens Pulver W 4 Steve Vincent	ESPN2	w	D+	B	B+
Proof that heavy hands make up for a lot, especially in a four-rounder						
6-15-04	Omar Sheika W 10 Manu Ntoh	ESPN2	lh	B-	C+	B-
It's never a good sign when a guy's claim to fame is that he's never been stopped; decent scrap anyway						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

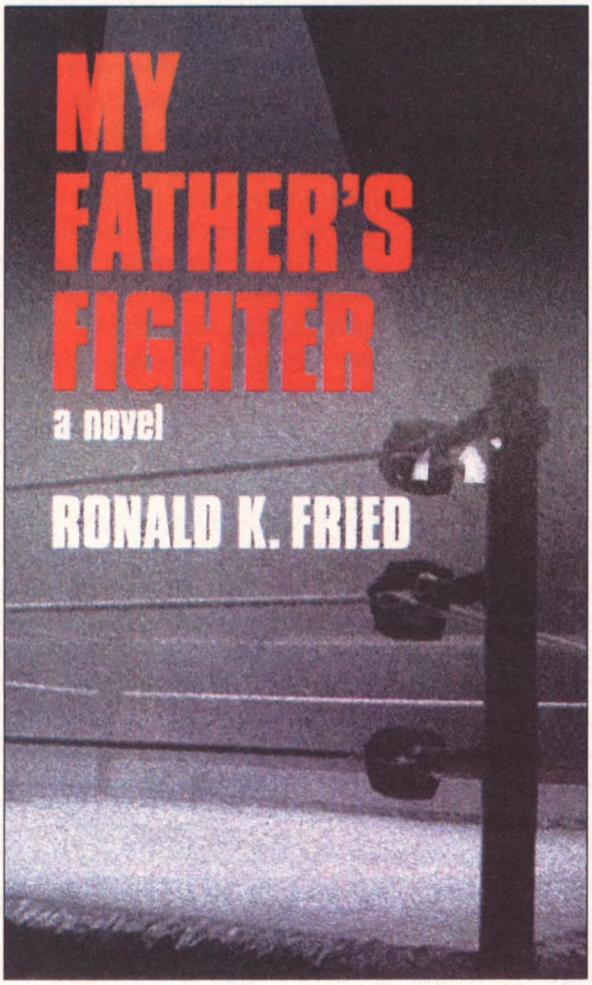
Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF

My original intention regarding *My Father's Fighter* (The Permanent Press, 175 pages, $24 hardcover) was to hoist a dubious eyebrow at its unlikely premise, caricatured characters, thin plot development, and melodramatic ending, and then offer a plenary indulgence to author Ronald K. Fried for his excellent 1991 non-fiction book, *Corner Men: Great Boxing Trainers*.

Then, as I sat down to work, came the news that the chairman of the Republican National Committee—chief spokesman for the party of Senator John McCain, who wants a federal boxing commission to loosen the stranglehold on the sport of people like promoter Don King—began touring the country to tout the re-election of George W. Bush in the company of none other than Don King. So maybe the fish-out-of-water tale of a sensitive Jewish high school teacher who inherits a light heavyweight contender from his estranged, dead father isn't so hard to swallow after all.



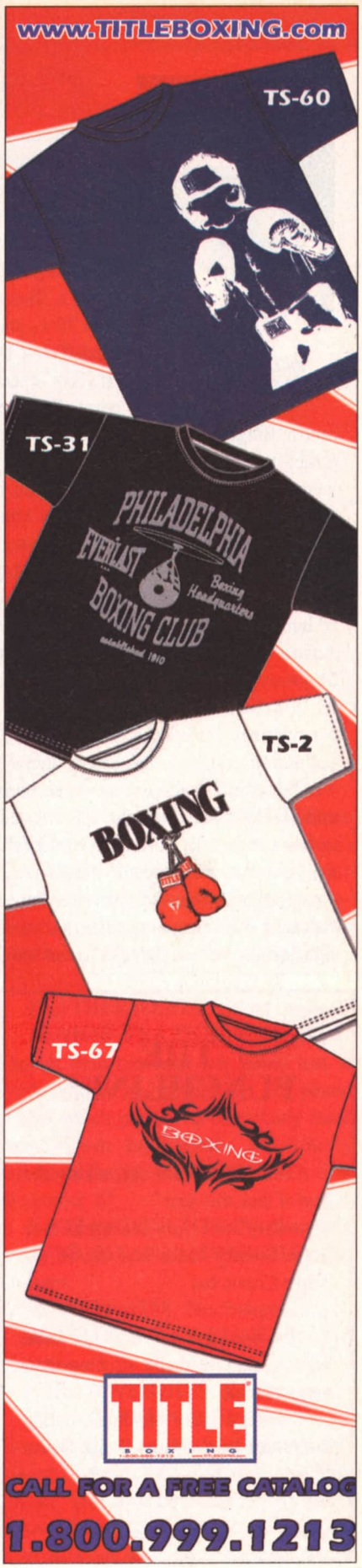
Upon further reflection, Fried's novel has other things to recommend it, including his obvious knowledge of the boxing business, the ability to turn a deft sentence, and a fondness for Balzac that he transfers to lead character Vincent Rosen, the clueless pedagogue who finds himself the titular pilot of Micky Davis, a slob of a White Hope whose attention never wanders very far from his various bodily emissions.

Davis is based on 1940s lightweight contender Al "Bummy" Davis, although clearly not the sainted version of Ron Ross' recent bio, *Bummy Davis vs. Murder Inc.*

Rosen's snooty doctor wife, a pair of mobsters trying to horn in on his action, a female Don King whose trademark is not electric hair but a monolithic rear end, and a weary, wary, and wise black trainer round out the predictable cast of characters.

It's nowhere near as enthralling as *The Professional* or *The Harder They Fall* even after a dozen readings apiece, but it beats wondering if King will become federal boxing commissioner in a second Bush administration.

—Pete Ehrmann



OUTSIDE THE ROPES

Katz: Rumbled with Borges in Vegas

Two days before the "Collision Course" pay-per-view show in Las Vegas in early-June, two veteran boxing writers collided in an embarrassing physical confrontation in the press room at the MGM Grand. After **Michael Katz** of maxboxing.com called **Ron Borges** of the *Boston Globe* a "**Don King** toady," the expletives flew, and then so did an open-handed shot from Borges that landed on Katz' cheek and knocked off his beret. Katz soon started poking his cane at Borges with bad intentions, and several onlookers quickly rushed in to try to break up the scuffle. Injured in the madness were Top Rank's **Lee Samuels**, who hurt his shoulder after jumping on Borges' back to reign him in, and HBO's **Kery Davis**, who hurt his knee when promoter **Bob Arum** fell on top of him ... Pound-for-pounder **Floyd Mayweather** got off fairly light in mid-June, when Nevada judge **Deborah Lippis** convicted him on two counts of misdemeanor battery stemming from an August '03 altercation, but suspended his one-year jail sentence. Mayweather was ordered to undergo counseling and either pay a $1,000 fine or serve 100 hours of community service. Mayweather denied ever having seen the two women he was accused of punching, but Lippis didn't believe him, saying she was "shocked" at the lies she believed he was telling ... Super middleweight **Joe Calzaghe** was arrested in Wales in early-June in connection with an allegation of what police called "threatening behavior." Few specific details were issued, except that the complaint was believed to involve his estranged wife, **Mandy**. Calzaghe was released pending further inquiries ... Another top fighter from Britain, Scottish featherweight **Scott Harrison**, was found not guilty in early-June of committing assault at a bar last August. Harrison insisted all along that all he did was break up a fight ... Onetime heavyweight prospect **Jo-El Scott**, who's been in and out of prison since 1996, was charged with murdering and sexually assaulting a 59-year-old woman in Albany, New York, in mid-June. When officers arrived, Scott, 33, was standing over the woman's body, allegedly covered in her blood. Scott was being held without bail as of press time ... Not surprisingly, with the criminal case behind him, **Mike Tyson** is now facing a civil suit from one of the men involved in the infamous June '03 Brooklyn Marriott Hotel altercation. **Samuel Velez** sued Tyson in late-May for $15-million ... Recently retired female fighter **Deirdre Gogarty**, best known for battling **Christy Martin** back in '96, was named to the Louisiana State Boxing and Wrestling Commission in early-June, making her the first woman to be appointed to the seven-person commission ... In a thoroughly inexplicable move, the California-based World Boxing Hall of Fame named **Oscar De La Hoya** its Fighter of the Year in mid-June, after he completed a 12-month span in which he lost to **Shane Mosley** and nearly lost to **Felix Sturm**. Despite the wacky starting and ending points on their calendar, the WBHOF's choices usually make some degree of sense; not this time ... Former heavyweight contender **Ray Mercer** announced his retirement in late-May at the age of 43. Mercer upset **Tommy Morrison** in 1991 for the WBO strap, but then lost most of his subsequent significant fights, against the likes of **Larry Holmes**, **Evander Holyfield**, **Lennox Lewis**, and **Wladimir Klitschko**. He finished with a record of 33-5-1 (25).

Mercer: Merciful end to boxing career

THE PUNCHLINES

"The Joneses are not having the best of luck this year."

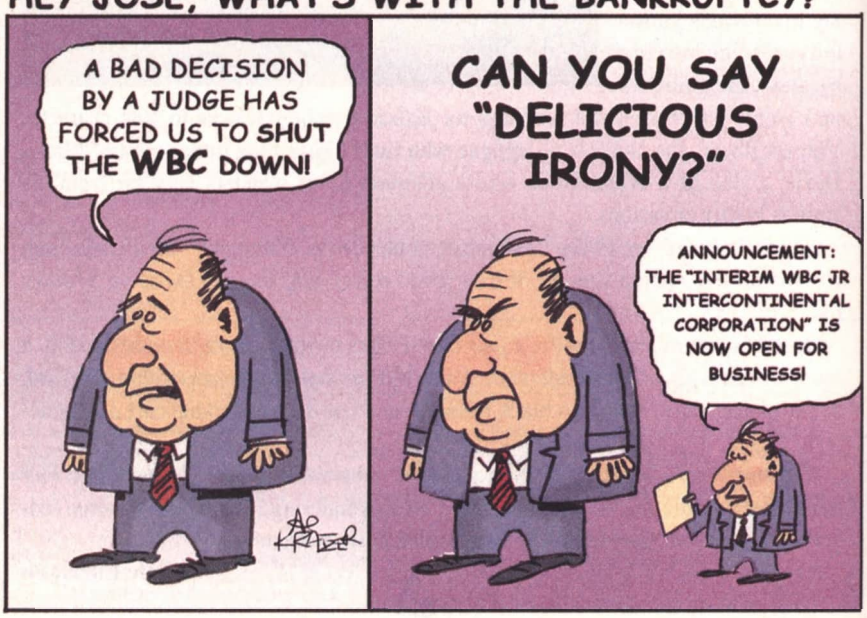
—Roy Jones, on the night race horse Smarty Jones lost out on his Triple Crown bid

"For two guys who could be male models, they're really sticking their noses in there."

—HBO's Larry Merchant, during the Oscar De La Hoya-Felix Sturm fight

AL KRATZER'S VIEW

HEY JOSE, WHAT'S WITH THE BANKRUPTCY?



The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Junior Welterweight
3. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Light Heavyweight
4. **ROY JONES**
   Light Heavyweight
5. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   Junior Middleweight
6. **ERIK MORALES**
   Junior Lightweight
7. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Featherweight
8. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Featherweight
9. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Middleweight
10. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
    Junior Welterweight

(For period ended June 16, 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Markus Beyer (seventh last issue) exits following his loss to Cristian Sanavia, who debuts at number 10. Beyer's departure also bumps up Charles Brewer (eighth last issue), Mads Larsen (ninth last issue), and Robin Reid (10th last issue) one spot each.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Big shakeup: Oscar De La Hoya (number one at junior middle last issue) is now number two at 160 pounds, while the man who gave him such a tough introduction to the division, Felix Sturm, jumps from seventh to third. Rodney Jones (third last issue) exits as he is now campaigning at 154 pounds. Robert Allen falls from second to fourth after losing to Bernard Hopkins in a bid to win the world title. William Joppy (fourth last issue), Jermain Taylor (fifth last issue), and Maselino Masoe (sixth last issue) each drop one position due to the reshuffling.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: De La Hoya's move up to middleweight allows Shane Mosley (second last issue) to assume the top spot. Fernando Vargas slips from third to fourth due to relative inactivity, while Kassim Ouma improves from fourth to second, and Verno Phillips, who has been on a good run since losing to Ouma in 2001, jumps from fifth to third. De La Hoya's exit also lifts Javier Castillejo (sixth last issue), Daniel Santos (seventh last issue), and Travis Simms (eighth last issue) one rung each. Rodney Jones, who had previously fought at both 160 and 154, appears to have settled at junior middle, and is currently number eight.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Jose Luis Castillo (second last issue) is the new world champion, thanks to his decision over Juan Lazcano, who stays at the number-one spot. Castillo's ascension allows everybody rated below him last issue to move up one place, and makes room for Isaac Hlatshwayo at number 10.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Steve Forbes (sixth last issue) departs as he is now planning to campaign at lightweight. Forbes' removal raises everybody rated below him last issue one notch, and allows streaking Mike Anchondo to return at number 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Osamu Sato (seventh last issue) lost at featherweight and departs the 122-pound ranks, which pushes up everybody rated below him last issue. Previously unranked Sergio Manuel Medina is new at number 10.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Oscar De La Hoya (fifth last issue) slides to ninth following his perilously close win over Felix Sturm. This advances everybody rated below him last issue one spot each, except Kostya Tszyu, who stays at number 10. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended June 16, 2004

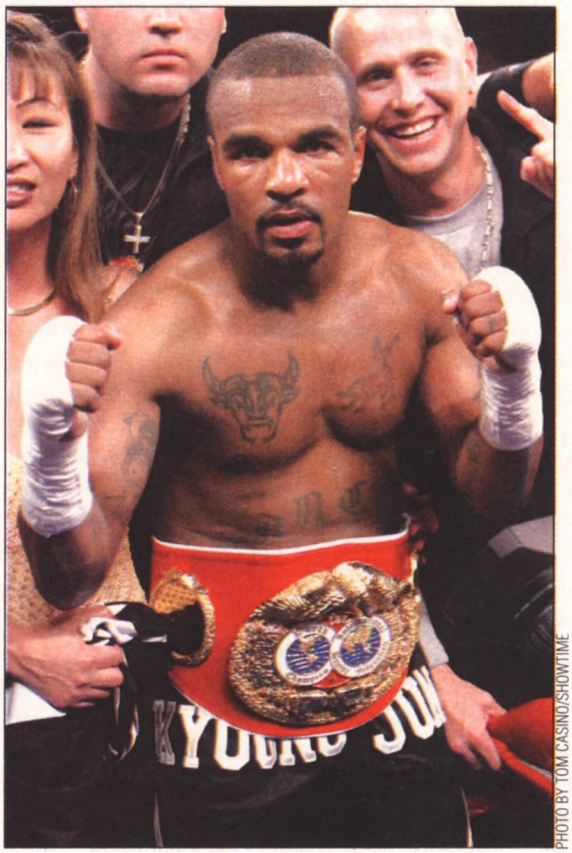


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Busy Verno Phillips advanced two spots at junior middleweight

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: VITALI KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 34-2 (33)

1. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 37-2-1 (20)
2. **JOHN RUIZ**
Methuen, MA 40-5-1 (28)
3. **JAMES TONEY**
Ann Arbor, MI 67-4-2 (43)
4. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 37-5-1 (30)
5. **MONTE BARRETT**
Queens, NY 30-3 (16)
6. **ANDREW GOLOTA**
Poland 38-4-1 (31)
7. **FRES OQUENDO**
Puerto Rico 24-3 (15)
8. **LAMON BREWSTER**
Los Angeles, CA 30-2 (27)
9. **JAMEEL McCLINE**
Port Jefferson, NY 31-3-1 (19)
10. **JOE MESI**
Tonawanda, NY 29-0 (25)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: WINKY WRIGHT
St. Petersburg, FL 47-3 (25)

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 39-3 (35)
2. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 19-1-1 (13)
3. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 38-8-1 (20)
4. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 24-2 (22)
5. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 58-5 (40)
6. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 28-2-1 (20)
7. **TRAVIS SIMMS**
Norwalk, CT 23-0 (18)
8. **RODNEY JONES**
Lafayette, LA 33-3 (22)
9. **J.C. CANDELO**
Colombia 27-6-3 (19)
10. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 46-5 (30)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MANNY PACQUIAO
Philippines 38-2-2 (29)

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 42-2-1 (33)
2. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 57-4 (40)
3. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 21-2-1 (11)
4. **INJIN CHI**
South Korea 28-2-1 (17)
5. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 62-14 (28)
6. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 39-6-1 (24)
7. **WILLIAM ABELYAN**
Glendale, CA 23-4-1 (12)
8. **MICHAEL BRODIE**
England 35-2-1 (23)
9. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 20-0 (14)
10. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Tulsa, OK 25-0 (15)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 52-3-1 (35)
2. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 36-3 (27)
3. **MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR**
France 25-2-2 (16)
4. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 21-0 (17)
5. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 24-3-1 (14)
6. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE**
France 43-5-1 (21)
7. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 36-1-1 (19)
8. **JORGE LACIERVA**
Mexico 25-5-4 (17)
9. **ART SIMONYAN**
Glendale, CA 14-0-1 (7)
10. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA**
Argentina 18-0 (10)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 31-3 (28)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 43-1-2 (30)
3. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 55-2 (26)
4. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN**
Thailand 56-8 (38)
5. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 31-4 (19)
6. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 24-12-1 (20)
7. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 23-4-3 (14)
8. **HERIBERTO RUIZ**
Mexico 30-2-2 (13)
9. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 15-0 (14)
10. **RICARDO VARGAS**
Mexico 36-10-3 (11)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 21-0 (17)
2. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 30-2 (21)
3. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 43-12-2 (28)
4. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 22-1-1 (21)
5. **KELVIN DAVIS**
   Reno, NV 21-2-1 (16)
6. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England 32-6 (24)
7. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
   Philadelphia, PA 15-0 (8)
8. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 49-5 (23)
9. **DALE BROWN**
   Canada 31-3-1 (20)
10. **PIETRO AURINO**
    Italy 28-2 (13)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ANTONIO TARVER
Orlando, FL 22-2 (18)

1. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL 49-2 (38)
2. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
   Hungary 20-0 (13)
3. **GLENCOFFE JOHNSON**
   Miami, FL 40-9-2 (27)
4. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 36-2 (22)
5. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 48-1 (38)
6. **CLINTON WOODS**
   England 35-3-1 (21)
7. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   Franco 46-2 (30)
8. **STIPE DREWS**
   Croatia 26-0 (12)
9. **SILVIO BRANCO**
   Italy 49-7-2 (30)
10. **RICO HOYE**
    Detroit, MI 17-0 (14)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 37-0 (30)
2. **MANNY SIACA**
   Puerto Rico 18-4 (16)
3. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 20-2 (15)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 30-5-1 (26)
5. **DANNY GREEN**
   Australia 18-1 (17)
6. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 25-3-1 (18)
7. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 40-9 (28)
8. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 45-2 (37)
9. **ROBIN REID**
   England 36-4-1 (27)
10. **CRISTIAN SANAVIA**
    Italy 33-1 (12)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 44-2-1 (31)

1. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 39-1 (35)
2. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Los Angeles, CA 37-3 (29)
3. **FELIX STURM**
   Germany 20-1 (9)
4. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA 36-5 (27)
5. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 34-3-1 (25)
6. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
   Little Rock, AR 20-0 (15)
7. **MASELINO MASOE**
   New Zealand 26-2 (25)
8. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
   Canada 20-1 (10)
9. **RAYMOND JOVAL**
   Netherlands 32-2 (14)
10. **SAM SOLIMAN**
    Australia 26-7 (9)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: CORY SPINKS
St. Louis, MO 33-2 (11)

1. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 30-3 (21)
2. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 35-2 (26)
3. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 31-2 (22)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 34-0 (26)
5. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 41-2 (25)
6. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 25-10-1 (18)
7. **TEDDY REID**
   Adelphi, MD 22-5-1 (16)
8. **JAWAID KHALIQ**
   England 23-1-1 (13)
9. **JOSE RIVERA**
   Worcester, MA 37-3-1 (24)
10. **CARLOS BALDOMIR**
    Argentina 40-9-6 (12)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 30-1 (24)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 54-3 (30)
2. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 37-6 (28)
3. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
   Brooklyn, NY 24-1-1 (16)
4. **RICKY HATTON**
   England 36-0 (26)
5. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 32-0 (21)
6. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 28-3-1 (16)
7. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 34-2 (10)
8. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 20-0 (16)
9. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
   Australia 38-7-1 (24)
10. **JUNIOR WITTER**
    England 29-1-2 (18)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JOSE LUIS CASTILLO
Mexico 50-6-1 (45)

1. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 33-3-1 (25)
2. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 35-3-1 (17)
3. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 35-0 (31)
4. **JULIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 30-2 (22)
5. **JAVIER JAUREGUI**
   Mexico 47-11-2 (34)
6. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 36-1 (22)
7. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 56-3-2 (41)
8. **LAKVA SIM**
   Mongolia 19-3-1 (16)
9. **JUAN DIAZ**
   Houston, TX 24-0 (12)
10. **ISAAC HLATSHWAYO**
    South Africa 20-0 (9)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA 38-2 (31)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 30-2 (19)
3. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 46-1 (34)
4. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 40-3 (28)
5. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 40-3-1 (24)
6. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
   Thailand 42-2-1 (35)
7. **JORGE BARRIOS**
   Argentina 41-2-1 (29)
8. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
   Mexico 20-8-1 (13)
9. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
   South Africa 29-1 (16)
10. **MIKE ANCHONDO**
    La Puente, CA 24-0 (18)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 30-2-1 (8)
2. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 43-3 (28)
3. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 25-0 (24)
4. **LUIS PEREZ**
   Nicaragua 22-1 (14)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 28-1-1 (22)
6. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
   Mexico 26-1 (16)
7. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 22-5-1 (11)
8. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 31-4-1 (21)
9. **JOSE NAVARRO**
   Los Angeles, CA 20-0 (8)
10. **ERIC MOREL**
    Madison, WI 34-1 (18)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 51-2 (27)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
   Venezuela 23-0 (17)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 28-0 (21)
4. **MZUKISI SIKALI**
   South Africa 28-4-2 (17)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 16-0-2 (10)
6. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Australia 21-0 (16)
7. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
   France 15-0 (6)
8. **HUSSEIN HUSSEIN**
   Australia 25-1 (19)
9. **LUIS MALDONADO**
   Mexico 28-0 (20)
10. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
    Japan 22-2-1 (9)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: ROSENDO ALVAREZ
Nicaragua 32-2-2 (21)

1. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 36-3-1 (27)
2. **VICTOR BURGOS**
   Mexico 37-13-3 (22)
3. **BEIBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 29-2 (23)
4. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 20-2-2 (12)
5. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 30-2 (14)
6. **FAHLAN SAKKREERIN**
   Thailand 50-4-2 (20)
7. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 35-3 (21)
8. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 13-0 (9)
9. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ**
   Panama 15-1 (13)
10. **HUGO CAZARES**
    Mexico 18-3-1 (14)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 20-2-1 (10)
2. **EAGLE AKAKURA**
   Japan 12-0 (5)
3. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 34-1-1 (29)
4. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 31-2-1 (19)
5. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
   Japan 15-1-3 (8)
6. **IVAN CALDERON**
   Puerto Rico 19-0 (3)
7. **JUAN LANDAETA**
   Venezuela 15-2-1 (13)
8. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 50-2-3 (17)
9. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
   Indonesia 48-7-3 (21)
10. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
    Mexico 22-6-3 (11)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

LIBERATION

At that moment when he blasted a four-division titlist and HBO's mascot to the canvas with one titanic punch, Antonio Tarver was more than just a feisty challenger unexpectedly handing an all-time great his first real defeat. Tarver was the cavalry charging over the hill, the life raft inflating in the choppy sea, and the caped superhero swooping out of the sky and breaking down the door just in the nick of time.

He was the rescuer, the liberator, and the deliverer, all in one. Tarver was our messiah of maul, our savior of slug. He was the man who spared us from any more of Roy Jones' antics, tactics, semantics, and any of the other many tics that were part of his repertoire.

Oh, sure, Jones may wage war again and, in the meantime, he'll play that game of career-planning ping-pong that he's so great at. Does he seek a third Tarver bout? Return to heavyweight? Chase the cruisers? Go on the Atkins Diet and drop down to flyweight? Cut another rap record? Cut a fart? Well, for once, we don't care! Tarver's punch didn't just render Jones helpless. It also rendered him less important. It changed the fistic landscape so that we don't *have to* pay attention to Jones anymore, don't *have to* monitor and sweat out his every move. We've served our time. Throw open the cell door and let us out. We're free!

For the past 16 years, we diligently followed Jones on his journey from Seoul to Canastota. All the while we tolerated the stuff we didn't like because when you've never lost (nobody counts the DQ against Montell Griffin), you occupy or hover around the top spot in the pound-for-pound rat-

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Ryan wasn't sad to finally see Jones in this position

ings for years, and you even inspire a couple of respected journalists to ask aloud if you might be the best pugilist who ever lived, we must continually secure press credentials, buy tickets, or order pay-per-view when you fight. And we must hypothesize, speculate, and breathlessly anticipate when you don't.

The problem with Jones, though, is that, in recent years, devoting attention to him ceased being fun and instead became a real chore. The aggressive and supremely confident human lightning bolt who stopped 20 of his first 21 opponents, dominated James Toney, avenged the Griffin fiasco with a one-round blowout, and dispatched the never-before-kayoed Virgil Hill with a single bodyshot, became downright boring in many bouts. He fought more cautiously, started going the distance more often, and seemed content to merely post a "W," never mind if the show wasn't good or the immortals weren't moved to dust off the welcome mat for him.

PHOTO BY ANTHONY NESTE/HBO

What could have been: Jones destroying Griffin in the rematch

It was much the same way in the latter third of Pernell Whitaker's career. "Sweet Pea," who once drew cheers with just his head feints, became dull and predictable. Every outing was the same: The southpaw Whitaker dominated with his right jab and combinations, the other guy had absolutely no chance of catching him with more than one clean punch every couple of rounds, and The Pea couldn't have scored a knockout if he'd had steel rods in his gloves and was assured that he'd only have to keep his rival down for a five-count. Whitaker was must-see, must-read, and must-follow, however, until he dropped a clear-cut decision to Felix Trinidad in 1999 at the age of 35. Because up to that point, many observers were convinced The Pea had never really lost a bout.

What made Jones even tougher to endure than Whitaker, however, were Jones' attitude and the games he played with the fans, the media, and himself. After he seemed to have reached a new plateau with his trouncing of WBA heavyweight king John Ruiz in 2003, Jones got us all worked up by talking about showdowns with everyone from Mike Tyson to Corrie Sanders. He even went from saying he wouldn't ever challenge the much bigger Lennox Lewis to leaving the possibility open. And then Jones took the steam out of us by returning to light heavyweight for a defense against Tarver. While that wasn't exactly like 12 rounds on the speedbag, it was, nonetheless, not a fight most of the boxing public wanted to see. It wanted Jones campaigning at heavyweight.

Even before the Tarver rematch, Jones was teasing everyone again, talking about squaring off with Vitali Klitschko. "I like fighting big people," Jones said. "And people would love to see me fight somebody as big as Klitschko is. I know I can whip him. I'm not going to tell you why I know I can whip him, but I know I can beat him."

Jones always talked confidently, but in the twilight years, he hasn't always backed up the supposed fearlessness. (Sometimes, he made you wonder if he'd been shocked upon turning pro to discover that boxing is a contact sport.) Jones ducked then-undefeated Dariusz Michalczewski, a fighter nobody but Jones confused with Bob Foster. Other foes were handpicked as though Jones was Donald Trump looking for a girlfriend or an old lady at the supermarket seeking the perfect plum. Every career move was analyzed and re-analyzed. Then the re-analysis was analyzed. Matchups we knew damn well wouldn't ever take place were nonetheless dangled in front of the public to judge interest. Jones floated so many trial balloons, he made the Super Bowl halftime show envious.

Eighteen years before Jones took away Ruiz' alphabet title, Michael Spinks, another great light heavyweight king, made a successful jump to heavyweight. Unlike Jones, Spinks remained in the division for five bouts. When he finally crumbled for the first time as a pro, it was against a prime Tyson in the biggest fight that had ever been staged up to that point, not against Tarver in an outing only boxing diehards knew about.

It's hard to look at a career as successful as Jones'—a body of work that includes all those belts, so few rounds lost, a win over a taller, stronger, younger heavyweight who outweighed him by 33 pounds, the righting of the Griffin wrong, and enough picturesque combinations to fill a feature length film—and say that something is missing. But that's indeed the case.

Some of us never warmed up to Jones because although he was a superstar in so many ways, he was a disappointment in others. He fought too few big fights and seemed to be holding something back on many of those nights when the fight went to the scorecards. One always sensed that boxing didn't mean as much to him as it did to the Alis, Leonards, and Tysons, and that Jones didn't really care where he'd end up rated among the legends or what his biography in Canastota was going to read.

Considering all that he has accomplished, that he has now been decisively beaten, and that he's a not-so-young 35 years of age, this would be an excellent time for Jones to retire. If he doesn't, and instead comes back to face an opponent with a *real chance of beating him*, only then would Jones convince me that fighting is something he does because he craves it, not because it just happens to be what he does best and what pays him the heftiest sum.

And if my butt managed to turn up in a ringside seat or in front of a TV set tuned to HBO on that night when he cut loose with the combinations once again, well, for a change you could be sure that it would be out of curiosity and not compulsion. ■

DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

SHINE A LAMP ON VEGAS

Legend has it that the ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes used to wander the streets of Athens searching for an honest man. We don't know if he ever found one. But if Diogenes were around today, a good place not to look would be Las Vegas, Nevada.

Home of some of the screwiest judging in the world, Las Vegas did it again when Michael Buffer announced that all three judges scored Oscar De La Hoya over Felix Sturm by identical scores of 115-113. So Las Vegas gets De La Hoya vs. Bernard Hopkins after all. A decision the other way would have torpedoed the gazillion-dollar extravaganza that will rain cash on croupiers, car parkers, call girls, and casino owners. Gosh, what a fortuitous outcome.

Interesting that all three judges saw the 12th round—so clearly dominated by Sturm—for De La Hoya. Next time you wonder why Ricky Hatton, Joe Calzaghe, or Scott Harrison don't cross the pond to fight the best of the U.S., take another look at the De La Hoya-Sturm tape. That's why. And please, don't anybody tell me European judges do the same things to our guys.

No matter what's going on in the rest of the world, the United States is supposed to stand for something better. That's why the torture of POWs should be repugnant to us—and why we're supposed to give everybody an even break.

As for the fight itself, Sturm, 25, resembled a 160-pound version of the quick, classy fighter that Oscar was at that age. Now 31, Oscar looked very much like one of those aging opponents from places like Chihuahua and Sonora that savvy matchmakers bring up to California and Texas to take on the local favorites. Tough, gutsy fighters with a porous defense. The kind of guys a youthful Oscar swept through in the old days.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Sturm found Oscar eminently hittable

Like Shane Mosley, De La Hoya climbed above his optimum weight division, and it's probably too late to get back where he belongs. That shoulder-rolling defense drilled into him by Floyd Mayweather Sr. is entirely unsuited to a fighter who can no longer react quickly to what's coming at him. When you're unable to slip punches, you better keep your gloves high. And when you're too old and weary to hold your gloves up, it's time to hang them up.

Give the HBO crew credit for calling it the way they saw it, which was against the net-

work's golden goose. Roy Jones summed it up aptly: "I feel sorry for Sturm. He fell victim to an event that was bigger than he was." Does anyone doubt Jones was at that moment reflecting on the monstrous 1988 decision in Seoul, Korea, that cheated him out of his Olympic gold medal?

Full respect to Oscar for not trying to claim he won. His honesty was refreshing. Remember when Evander Holyfield tried to justify that ridiculous draw against Lennox Lewis?

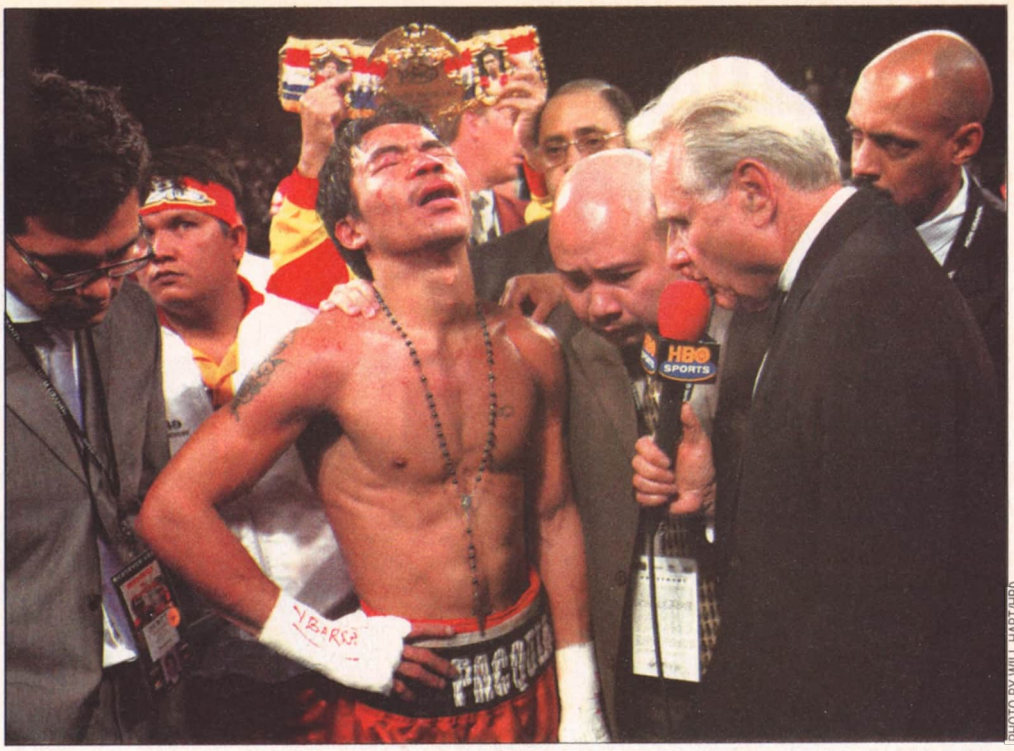


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Pacquiao: Victim of scoring "screw up"

MAGOO: The recipient is boxing writer Ron Borges of the *Boston Globe*, for selecting writer Mike Katz as a fight opponent. This was in the press room of the MGM Grand in Las Vegas a couple of days before June's twin bill featuring De La Hoya and Hopkins. Apparently, Katz had insulted Borges for taking a sideline gig as a TV commentator for Don King.

According to witnesses interviewed by the rival *Boston Herald*, Borges, who appears to be in shape, lunged across a table and slapped Katz across the back of the head, knocking his eyeglasses and trademark beret to the floor. It should be noted that Katz, a long-time boxing curmudgeon who these days toils for Maxboxing.com and as an occasional stringer for *The New York Times*, is one of the great insult-masters of our time. He's never said a kind word to me, either. But even if his remarks were outrageous, it should be noted he wears a neck brace, walks with a cane, and is one or two decades older than Borges.

Accounts vary on what took place after the beret flew. Some say both men let their fists fly, others that Katz flailed back with his cane. Since most witnesses were other boxing writers, we can't expect a unified account. Anytime you put three of them in the same room, you get three opinions on who won a fight. But it's clear the dust-up stained the reputation of boxing writers everywhere. Before this, we'd all been celebrated for our impeccable manners—except while stampeding toward free booze or chow.

Years ago in the brilliant film *Dr. Strangelove*, the late Peter Sellers, playing the U.S. President on the eve of destruction, informed a scuffling U.S. general and the Russian ambassador that there's "no fighting in the war room." Clearly somebody should have reminded Borges and Katz that there's no fighting at a fight promotion.

As a reward for trying to separate the two infuriated scribes, nice-guy Top Rank publicist Lee Samuels apparently injured his shoulder. His boss Bob Arum, 72, ended up on the floor.

My hat, if you'll excuse the expression, is half off to Katz. Yes, he should have exercised verbal restraint. But though physically overmatched, he didn't go looking for a security guard. He took care of his own business.

All this raises a question: Who else is on Borges' hit list? Stevie Wonder? The muscular dystrophy poster kid? Maybe Pope John Paul II or the spastic charwoman in *Deadwood*? Also, why haven't the Vegas sports books set up a line on the rematch? I'd make it 3-1 Borges or a pick-'em if you spot Katz his cane. Expect a lot of East Coast money to pour in on the Bostonian over Katz, who these days is a Vegas resident. I see the underdog as an astute bet here—unless King has anything to do with the promotion.

ONLY IN THE FIGHT GAME: No sport has perfect officials, but in boxing they make mistakes that wouldn't be tolerated in a kids' sandlot game. Where else do they have professional judges who can't score the event properly because they forget the rules?

In that Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez decision, Judge Burt Clements of Nevada, who saw it 113-113, admitted later that he "screwed up" scoring the first round only 10-7 for Pacquiao. He admitted later that because Marquez went down three times, he should have scored it 10-6, like the other two judges. Had Clements remembered how it's supposed to be done, the result would have been a split decision for Pacquiao instead of a draw. And that was a championship fight.

Can you imagine a baseball official saying something like "Gosh, after thinking it over, I guess three runners crossed the plate. So giving them only two runs in that inning was wrong. I'll try to do better next time."

Picture this in the NFL: "Gee, I should have given them three points for that field goal. It's a safety that gets two. I always get it mixed up. One of these days I'm gonna have to read that rulebook." ■

CHINOOK WINDS CASINO RESORT

Jorge Martinez distorts Juan Carlos Ramirez' face

By Brett Orr

PHOTOS BY JAN SANDERS

Every seat's a good seat at the Chinook Winds

After years of a mostly non-existent boxing scene, Northwest fans have discovered that boxing is alive and well on the coast. Just two scenic hours from Portland, The Chinook Winds Casino Resort has played a vital part in bringing live boxing back to the region.

The resort, owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, has shown a commitment to pros and amateurs alike, striking a balance between showcasing both regional and national talent. When not showing live bouts, they also present about 40 televised fights a year, hosting viewing parties for the larger events.

Starting in 1999, the resort kicked off their marquee fight night, "The Commotion At The Ocean" with a closely fought battle between Winky Wright and Fernando Vargas. The card, televised by HBO, also featured Diego Corrales vs. John Brown.

Following that were appearances by James Toney, Orlin Norris, and Tonya Harding, making her local debut. All together, the tribe has hosted five pro cards, promoted by the likes of Patrick Ortiz, Sugar Ray Leonard, Bob Arum, and Dan Goossen.

"My feeling is boxing and casinos go hand in hand," said Goossen, of Goossen-Tutor Promotions. Working with the tribal casinos gives Goossen a chance "to serve a

IF YOU GO

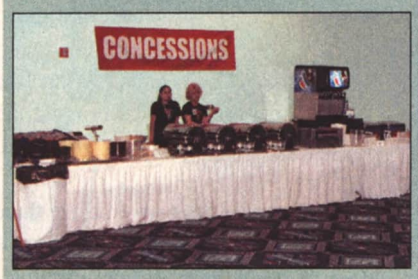
Location: 1777 NW 44th Street, Lincoln City, OR 97367; phone:1-888-CHI-NOOK

Directions: From Seattle and Portland, take I-5 south to Salem. In Salem take the Salem Parkway/OR 99E, which becomes Commercial St. NE. Turn right onto Marion St. NE, which becomes OR-22 W. Follow OR-22 W to OR-18. Merge onto US 101, turn right onto NW Logan Road, and turn left onto NW 44th Street.

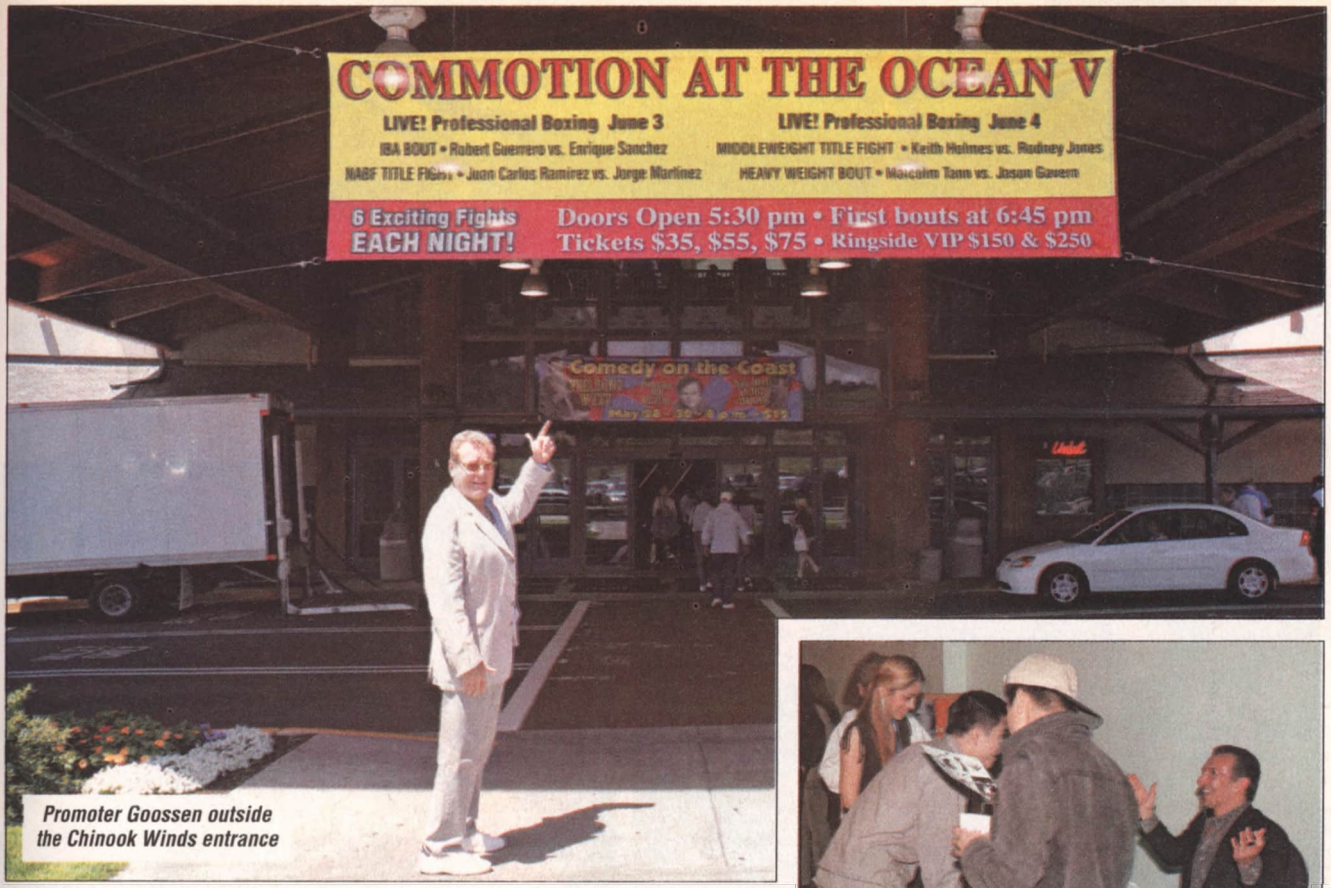
Tickets: Tickets range from $35 to $250 for pro fights, $10 to $20 for amateur bouts. Fans have to be 21 to attend pro cards, while all ages are permitted at amateur fights. Tickets are available through the box office or Tickets West at 1-800-992-8499.

Who to look out for: Sugar Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran, Ray "Boom-Boom" Mancini, Terry Norris, and Larry Holmes have all been on hand for autographs. Also in attendance have been former light heavyweight titleholder Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, manager Jackie Kallen, announcer Amy Hayes, former welter titlist Ike Quartey, and Portland's own, former lightweight contender Ray Lampkin. With the dressing rooms across the hall from the ring, you can expect to see the fighters on the card hanging around.

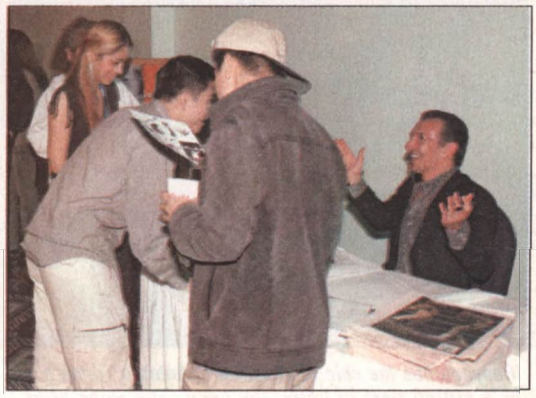
Advice to greenhorns: Give yourself two hours to arrive from Portland. In terms of sports bars, the lounge at the casino is one of the best bets in the state for catching a televised fight and a great place to meet fellow fight fans.



You won't go hungry at Chinook Winds



Promoter Goossen outside the Chinook Winds entrance



Ray Mancini greets fans and signs autographs

Round-card girls throw free T-shirts to the fans

new audience, to bring the fight to a new clientele that otherwise wouldn't have this opportunity."

With that in mind, Goossen hatched the ambitious idea for the two-night event that would become "Commotion At The Ocean V: Back-To-Back." While it wasn't Goossen's first back-to-back event, it was, nonetheless, a rare event for Northwest fight fans.

Starting on a Thursday night, fans were treated to a rousing *ShoBox* card, featuring rising star Robert "The Ghost" Guerrero in a featherweight bout. The following night, Fox Sports Net showcased local favorite and former junior lightweight titlist Steve "Two Pounds" Forbes. To cap off the weekend, the casino put on a closed-circuit viewing party on Saturday for the Oscar De La Hoya-Felix Sturm, Bernard Hopkins-Robert Allen fights.

Both the live fights and TV fight parties take place in the convention center, which holds between 1,300 and 1,900, depending on the configuration. With the farthest seat less than 100 feet from the ring, there are no bad seats. Crystal Davies, who does public relations for the casino, added, "It's nice that it presents all levels of boxing fans an opportunity to come to a fight."

Adding to the allure of the venue are over 1,200 slots, various gaming areas, concerts, special events, and a daycare/arcade for children ages 3-11. Nearby, there's everything from golfing to whale watching.

With the recent purchase of the neighboring hotel, the casino now has 247 rooms and suites to offer its guests. The resort also plans to add boxing packages for next summer's event where, if past cards are any indication, it should be a destination of choice for any fight fan. ■

The new home of boxing in the Pacific Northwest

CAMERA CLICKS

PHOTO BY DAVE BJERKE/NBC

If anyone has the chin to stand up to Antonio Tarver's left hand, it's the guy he's sitting next to here, Jay Leno. The week after "The Magic Man" dethroned Roy Jones with a colossal second-round shot, he appeared on The Tonight Show, *where he amused the viewing audience by letting the generously jawed host zap him with a playful left hand of his own.*

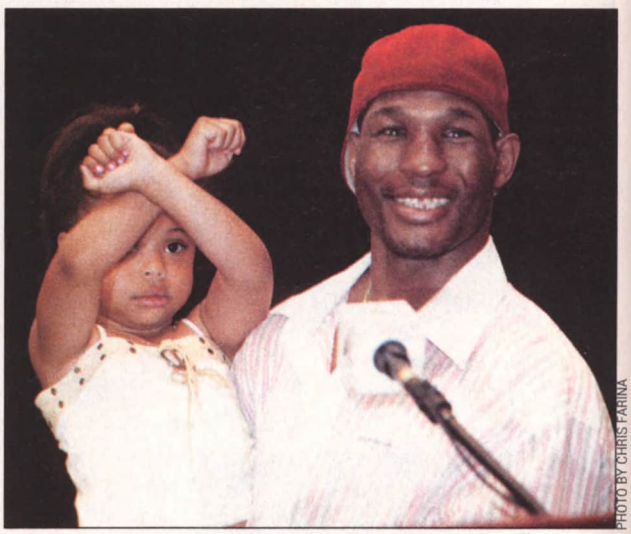


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

We're not sure if Latrece Hopkins knows the whole alphabet yet, but her daddy apparently taught her at least one letter. No truth to the rumor that Oscar De La Hoya is examining the fine print on the contract to see if it specifies which Hopkins he's obligated to face on September 18.

Featherweight legend Willie Pep, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease, isn't in the greatest of shape these days, but he's still ticking at age 81, thanks in large part to the care of his wife Barbara (pictured behind the Hall of Famer). Also pictured in this shot taken at the First And Last Restaurant in Middletown, Connecticut, are Steve Acunto, founder of the American Association for the Improvement of Boxing, and, on the far right, former Pep sparring partner Joe DeGuardia.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

It used to be a major deal when you'd fight in the parking lot at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, but fighting in a parking lot at Missouri State Southern University in Joplin, Missouri, doesn't quite have the same feel. Nevertheless, junior middleweight contender Verno Phillips took to the lot to shoot some promotional materials for Showtime prior to his June 5 fight with Carlos Bojorquez.

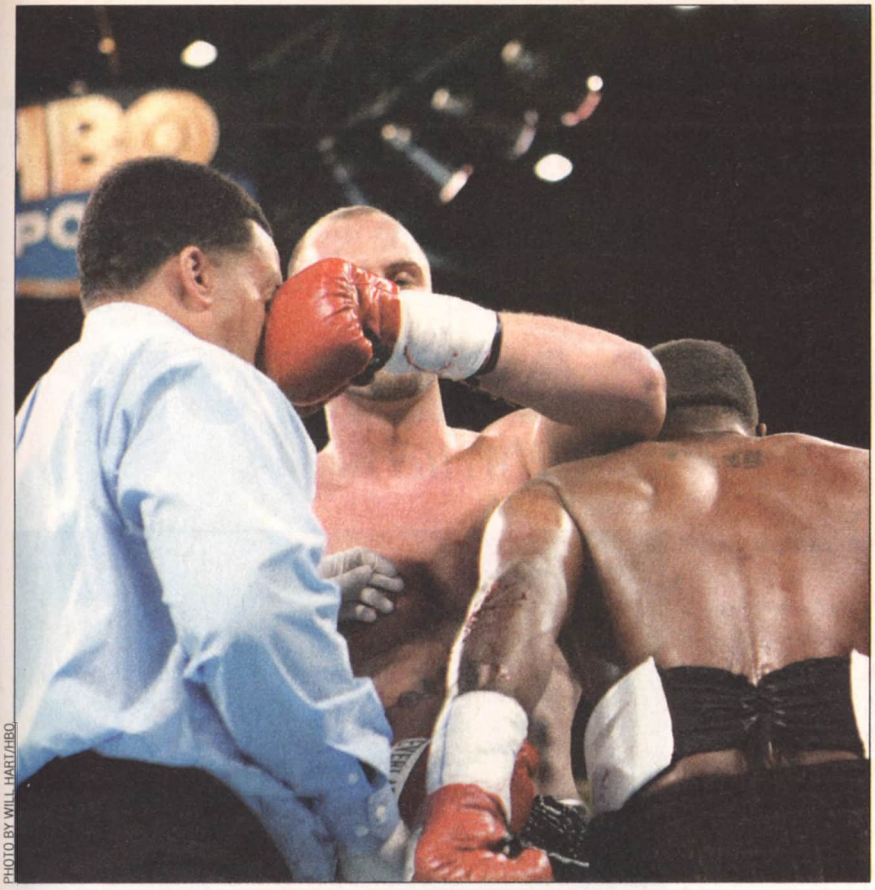


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Two facts are illustrated very clearly in this picture: First, heavyweight Kevin Montiy has atrocious aim; and second, referee Tony Weeks is one of the tougher officials around. Your guess is as good as ours as to how Montiy ended up smacking Weeks in the face, but we do know that he also smacked opponent Kevin Petty pretty good by the time this fight was over, scoring a second-round knockout victory.

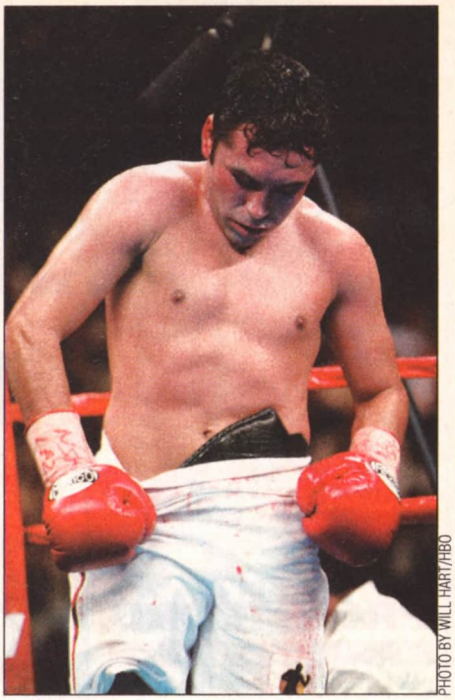


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

When Oscar De La Hoya said after his fight with Felix Sturm that "everything went wrong," he meant everything. That included his protective cup riding up and twisting around on him, making for the perfect unflattering companion to "The Golden Boy's" less than sterling physique.

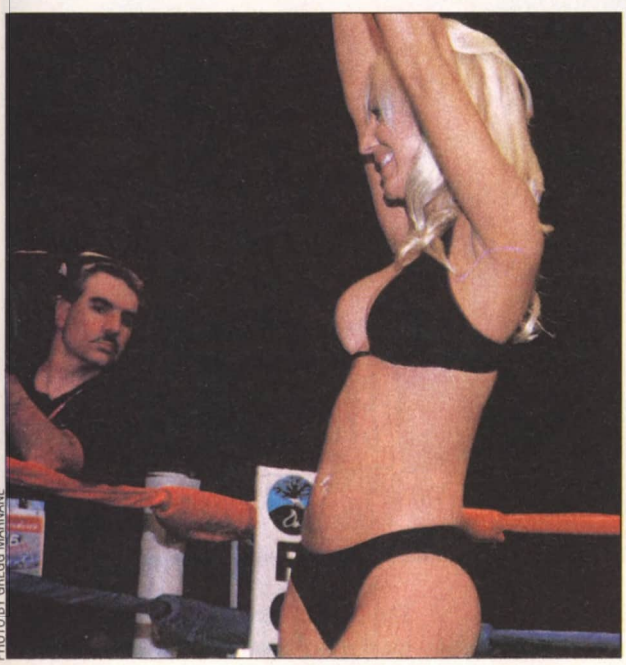
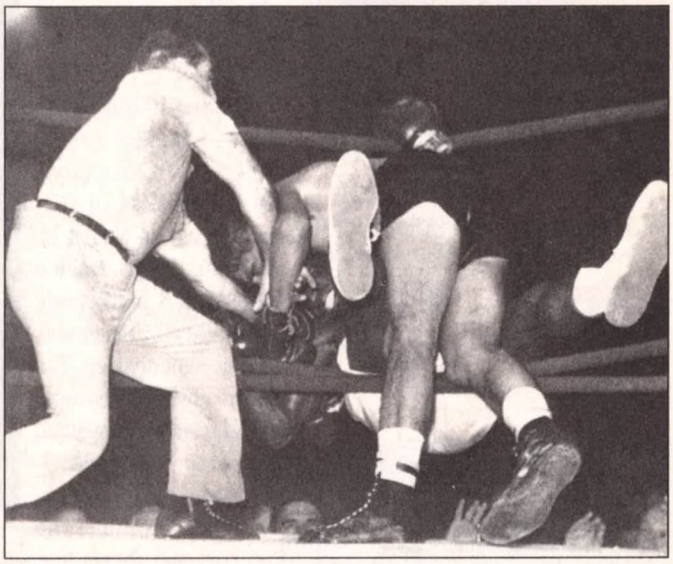


PHOTO BY GREGG MARNANE

It's difficult not to look at a sexy, young round-card girl wearing a bikini—just ask this cameraman. If he's a married man, let's hope his wife isn't a regular reader of THE RING.

NOSTALGIA CORNER



Despite referee Cy Gottfried's best efforts, you can just tell this isn't going to be a pleasant landing for future welterweight champion Luis Rodriguez. The Cuban fighter and opponent Chico Vejar both took a tumble in the seventh round of their March 1960 bout in Miami, but neither man was injured, and Rodriguez got up to win a 10-round unanimous decision.

NEW FACES

KENDALL HOLT

Junior Welterweight

By Joe Santoliquito

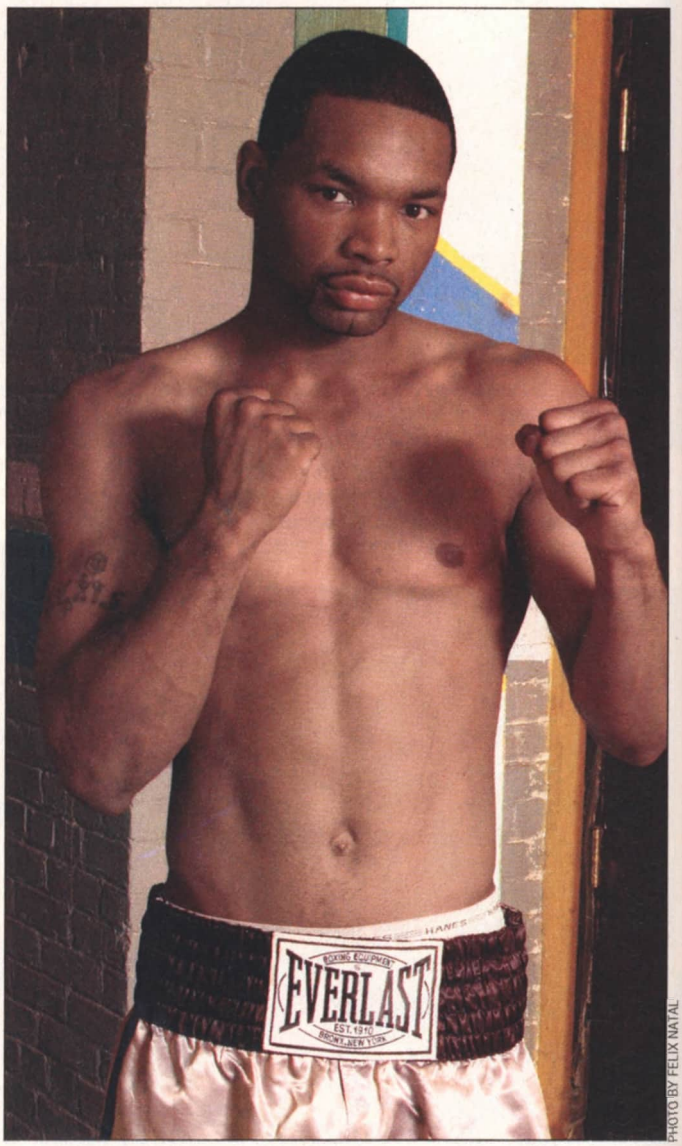


PHOTO BY FELIX NATAL

Kendall Holt's identity changed in an instant in March. About 20 seconds of national airtime caused people to refer to Holt as "That ESPN guy." People who had never even heard of Holt before suddenly wanted his autograph. Rappers wanted him on stage with them, because even if he didn't quite have a name or face that everyone recognized, people would know who he was when the rappers would refer to him as "that ESPN guy."

One punch—one hookercut—changed everything. It led to a first-round knockout of Gilberto Reyes on March 26 in Miami, Florida, and it's made Holt a marketable commodity in the junior welterweight division. The punch, a hybrid between a left hook and an uppercut, was abrupt and devastating. Reyes crashed in cartoon-like fashion. The knockout was shown live on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*, and it reached a far larger audience when it was shown repeatedly on ESPN's *SportsCenter* later that night, heading the list of the top 10 sports plays of the day.

The clip of the knockout was picked up by local news channels, and also by national outlets like CNN's *Headline News*. For Holt, who had never received any major TV

(Continued on page 83)

PRO RECORD

2001		
March 30	Frank Zorechak, Atlantic City	KO 1
April 20	Jonathan Kuhn, Cincinnati, OH	KO 1
June 26	Marat Suyantayev, New York City	KO 2
Oct. 26	Marcus Luck, Atlantic City	W 4
Dec. 14	Matt Hill, Uncasville, CT	KO 2
2002		
March 3	Curtis Wilkins, Scranton, PA	KO 3
April 20	Rashaan Blackburn, Paterson, NJ	KO 5
July 12	Norberto Frias, Hampton Beach, NH	W 6
Oct. 11	Kevin Carter, San Antonio, TX	KO 1
Nov. 7	Andrey Trunov, Washington, D.C.	W 6
2003		
March 15	Cardyl Finley, Washington, D.C.	KO 2
April 25	Richard Best, Norman, OK	KO 2
Oct. 24	Norberto Frias, Bushkill, PA	KO 4
Dec. 6	John Trigg, New York City	W 8
2004		
March 26	Gilberto Reyes, Miami, FL	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
15	15	0	0	11

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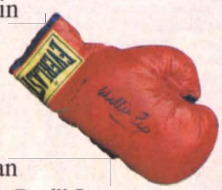
★ Virgil Hill
★ Kid Gavilan
★ Ken Buchanan
★ Danny "Little Red" Lopez
★ Angel Manfredy
★ Terry Norris
★ Jeff Fenech
★ Pipino Cuevas
★ Nino Benvenuti
★ "Irish" Micky Ward
★ Paulie Ayala
★ Ricardo "Finito" Lopez
★ Sir Henry Cooper
★ Livingstone Bramble
★ Donald Curry
★ Tommy Morrison
★ Angelo Dundee



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★ Benvenuti - Griffith

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OSCAR AWAITS EXECUTION

His Golden Neck Is On The Chopping Block Against Hopkins

By Bernard Fernandez

Bernard Hopkins has been around long enough to know how the game is played. Before you jab an opponent in the ring, you jab him verbally. It's called trash talking, and the undisputed middleweight champion from Philadelphia is one of the most fluent practitioners of the veiled and not-so-veiled putdown. Don Rickles could take lessons from "The Executioner."

Hopkins has contemptuously dismissed Roy Jones, Felix Trinidad, Keith Holmes, and William Joppy, among others, for perceived faults ranging from lack of courage to ineptitude in the ring. He all but laughed out loud at a bogus mandatory challenger named Morrade Hakkar, and he and fellow insult artist James "Lights Out" Toney exchanged some doozies before their proposed matchup fell through because of financial considerations.

But some of Hopkins' best zingers had been reserved for Oscar De La Hoya, whom he believed was evading him and, worse, was doing so as one of those pampered Olympic gold medalists who came up sleeping on silk sheets and eating filet mignon. Hopkins, who spent five years in Pennsylvania's Graterford Prison on a strong-arm robbery conviction, has the nice house and car these days, but he still sees himself as a street guy who grew up brushing roaches off stale bread and who made his box-

Is this how De La Hoya will end up on September 18? Robert Allen lands on his back after taking a right hand from Bernard Hopkins in the seventh round of their June bout in Las Vegas. Allen beat referee Joe Cortez' count, but lost a unanimous decision. "The Executioner's" victory set the stage for his September showdown with "The Golden Boy."

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

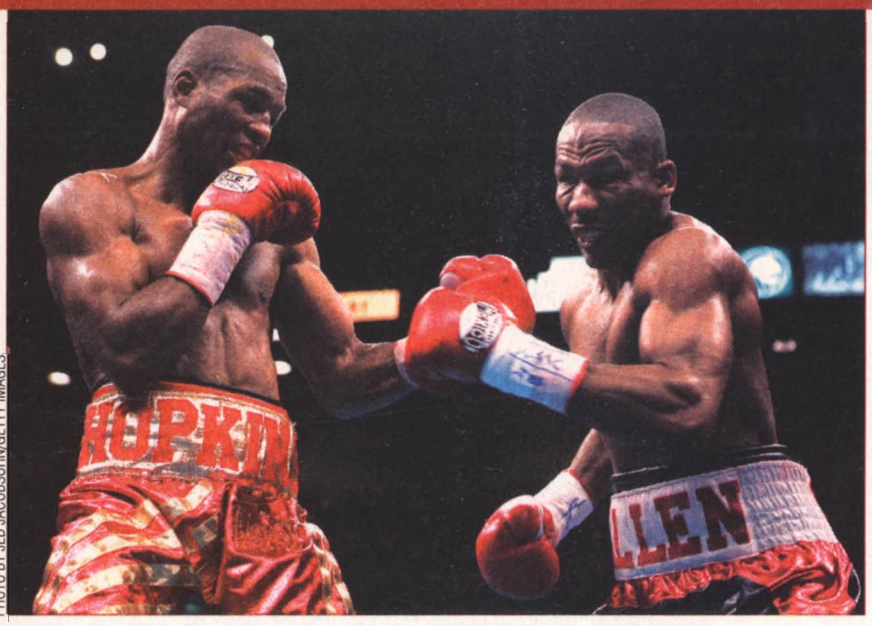

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Although he fought in a conservative manner against Allen to preserve himself for De La Hoya, Hopkins still controlled the action and racked up enough points to win a convincing unanimous decision. The fact that the crowd was unhappy with his methods didn't bother Hopkins one little bit.

ing bones off-TV at the Blue Horizon. To Hopkins, an Olympic pedigree—particularly if stamped in gold—is like a red flag waved in front of an ornery bull.

All of the public digs at De La Hoya stopped, however, when Hopkins—whose high purse had been $2.7-million for his September 29, 2001, unification showdown with Trinidad in Madison Square Garden—signed for a guaranteed $11.3-million for bouts against Robert Allen and "The Golden Boy" from East Los Angeles. Provided he got past Allen (for whom he received a relatively meager $1.3-million) and De La Hoya got past WBO middleweight titlist Felix Sturm in a June 5 HBO Pay-Per-View doubleheader, Hopkins was down for a $10-million payday to meet De La Hoya on September 18. If promoter Bob Arum's rosy projections are met, that megafight will surpass the record 1.4 million buys for De La Hoya-Trinidad in 1999, boosting Hopkins' slice of a very large pie to between $12-million and $15-million.

It's improper etiquette to smear mud on the luxury vehicle that is to carry you to previously unimagined riches.

"Thirty, 40 years from now, when they talk about De La Hoya's career, I'm pretty sure he'll be called a legend, no matter what happens June 5 and September 18," a deferential Hopkins said on a promotional tour that almost reeked of sweetness. "His credentials are already there.

"You can't knock Oscar. Look at who he's fought. The man has fought everybody. He fought Ike Quartey when Quartey was at his peak. He's fought 10 times tougher competition than Roy Jones. Oscar is a quiet killer, a silent killer. The way he talks, you think you're going to run in there and it'll be an easy night. No. It's never easy with Oscar."

Having had bouquets tossed his way, De La Hoya responded in kind. "This is a great challenge I will be facing," De La Hoya said of the likelihood of a pairing with Hopkins. "I will be facing the best middleweight, in my eyes, in history. There have been other greats, but Hopkins, he's the total package.

"I've won titles in five different weight classes, but I've never been an undisputed champion. In my career, I need new challenges. I need new tasks to conquer. People call me crazy, but it's going to be fun."

Yeah, well, maybe so if you think it's fun to be pummeled to a fare-thee-well.

Hopkins is likely to continue plying De La Hoya with compliments, in thankful recognition of all those new zeroes that soon will be deposited into his bank account, but the June 5 semifinals at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas confirmed what many already had believed. De La Hoya, 31, who began his professional career as a 130-pounder, not only is entering deep water against a natural middleweight who has reigned for nine years and a division-record 18 defenses, he is on the Titanic with his feet chained to the anchor. Think Leonard DiCaprio as he turned blue—black and blue might be more appropriate in this instance—just before

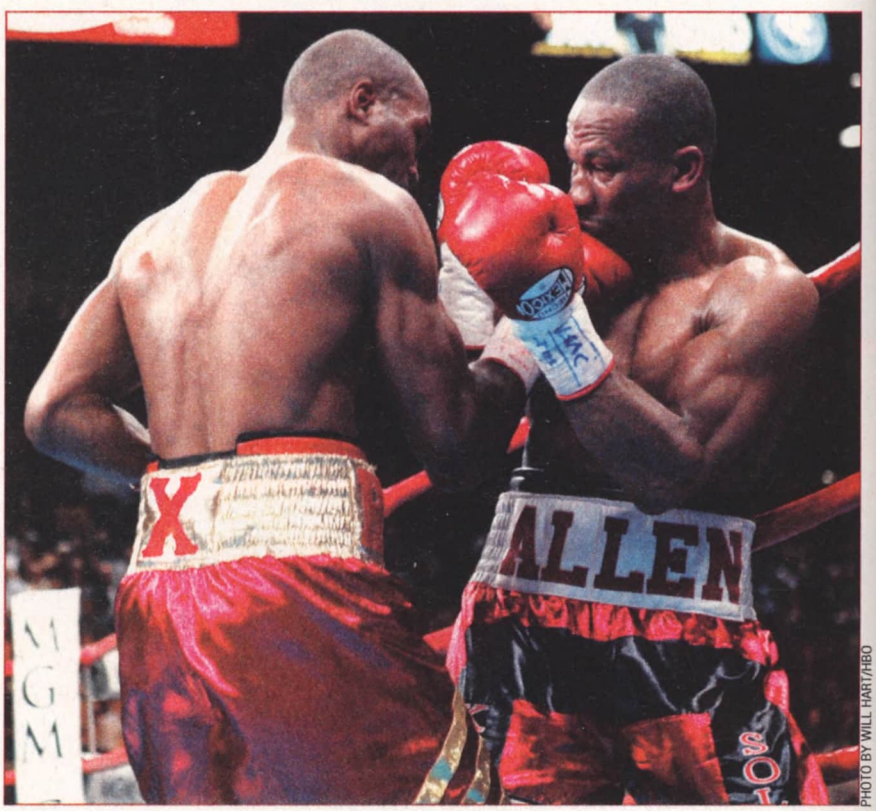

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Hopkins tags Allen with a right uppercut on the inside. The middleweight champ's strength and mastery at close-range action makes it highly unlikely that De La Hoya will wade in throwing hooks the way he did in the early rounds against Felix Sturm.

PHOTO BY CARLO ALLEGRI/GETTY IMAGES

Sturm plants a left jab in De La Hoya's face. The German's surprisingly strong showing has led many to believe that there's no way Oscar can beat a middleweight as accomplished as Hopkins.

going below the surface of the icy water for the last time.

Interpret the results as you will, but Hopkins' nice 'n' easy, unanimous-decision victory over Allen, against whom he now is 2-0 with 1 no-contest, stood in stark contrast to De La Hoya's skin-of-his-teeth points nod over Sturm, a German who came to America as a household name only in his own household. Those outcomes suggest that De La Hoya is not only looking at the fourth defeat of an admittedly Hall of Fame career, but maybe the first in which he takes an ass-kicking along the lines of the one Hopkins administered to Trinidad.

Although some in the on-site audience of 13,041 booed Hopkins' cautious approach against serial victim Allen, his strategy can't really be faulted. There have been too many upsets in boxing of late for even a prohibi-

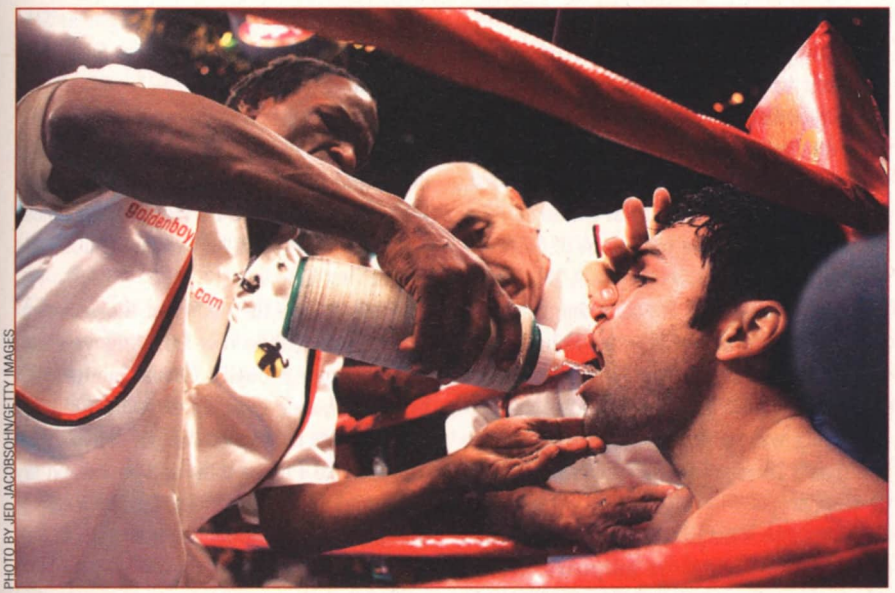

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr. gives De La Hoya a drink between rounds of the Sturm fight. It is widely believed that Mayweather will have to get Oscar in much better condition and come up with a better fight plan if The Golden Boy is going to have a chance of beating Hopkins.

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tive favorite (Hopkins went off as a 6-1 pick after opening at 11-1) to take unnecessary risks.

"Even when I had him hurt, I still wanted to be careful," Hopkins said of his disinclination to aggressively follow up after he had floored Allen with a winging right hand in the seventh round. "For this fight I was out of character and more nervous than usual because there was so much on the line. I've never been in this position before. I had to win to get to the $10-million. You never know. Freak accidents can happen.

"When you're in there against a tough puncher like Robert Allen, you have to be careful. If my next fight was for $100,000, I would have gone out there and taken more chances. But you saw what happened less than a month ago with Roy Jones (who got starched by a single punch from Antonio Tarver). It takes only one shot to shatter your dreams. I had Robert Allen where I wanted him. I wanted to be clean, concise, and to make my punches count. I didn't want to be the one that didn't come through."

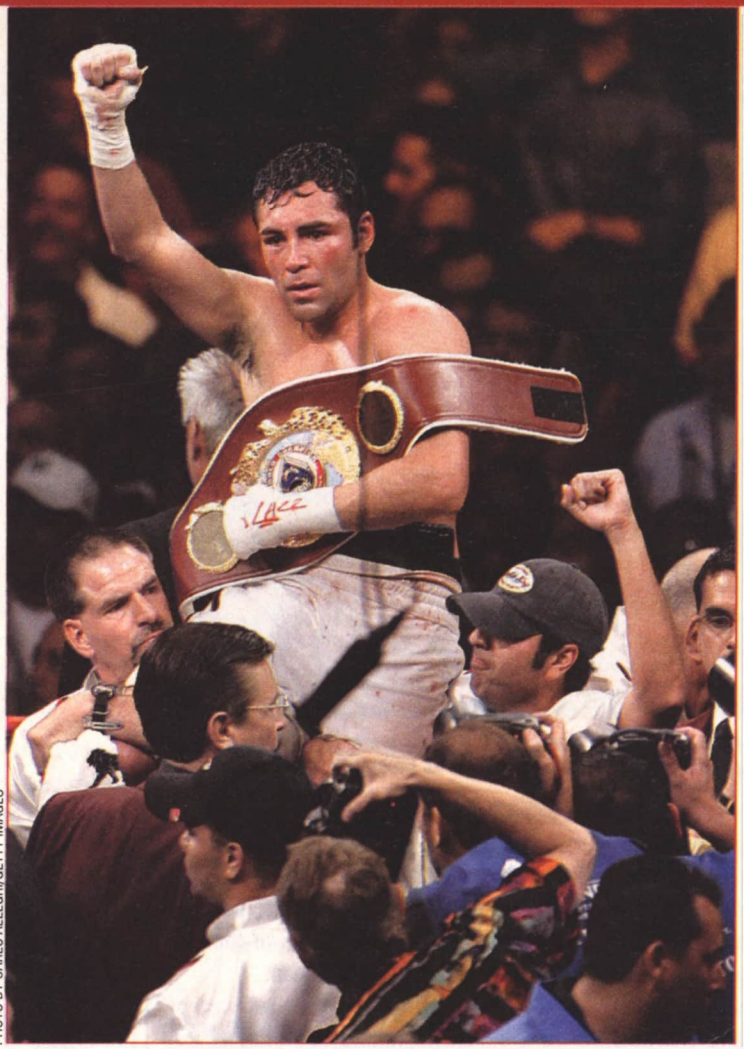


PHOTO BY CARLO ALLEGRI/GETTY IMAGES

A somewhat pensive looking De La Hoya clutches the WBO middleweight belt as he celebrates his narrow victory over Sturm. On September 18 he will attempt to win the genuine middleweight championship against Hopkins.

The judges gave Hopkins the comfortable cushion he deserved, even if it wasn't accompanied by the desired fireworks: Carol Castellano and Jerry Roth each had Hopkins up 119-107, while Patricia Morse-Jarman had it slightly closer at 117-109.

Having taken care of business against Allen, Hopkins was then obliged to sweat it out as De La Hoya, who also went off as a 6-1 favorite over Sturm, after opening as a 15-1 no-brainer, was pushed to the limit. Although Michael Glenna, Dave Moretti, and Paul Smith all turned in scorecards favoring De La Hoya by a 115-113 margin, Sturm would have retained his virtually worthless title on a majority draw had two of the judges given Sturm the 12th round. Instead, all three rewarded De La Hoya for having fared better in an action-packed final frame that seemingly was up for grabs.

Noting that Hopkins' and De La Hoya's contracts were structured in such a way that the September 18 date was a go only if both won on June 5, one ringsider observed that De La Hoya and Sturm had just fought what, in effect, was a $37-million round. De La Hoya is guaranteed a minimum of $27-million for his date with destiny with "Ex."

"What can I say? It was a tough fight. I have to admit I underestimated Felix Sturm. Things happen in the ring you don't expect," said De La Hoya, whose leading-man mug was reddened and swollen by the German's laser-guided jab and short, effective uppercuts.

For those who like to toss statistics into the blender for debate purposes, De La Hoya, according to CompuBox, landed only 188 of 792 punches (24 percent) to 234 of 541 (43 percent) for Sturm. De La Hoya had the edge in powershots, however, connecting with 130 of 394 (33 percent), although Sturm's 122 of 235 represented a significantly higher accuracy rate (52 percent).

"What can I say to the decision?" asked Sturm, whose real name is Adnan Catic. "I think I was the tougher guy. I was stronger. I was smarter tonight. I hope Oscar loves the sport and not the money enough to give me a rematch. If Oscar is a true champion, he will give me a rematch."

Truth be told, De La Hoya—who claimed he had been bothered by a sore back, which was being treated by a chiropractor—might not be especially eager to again exchange punches with Sturm. But if Oscar is looking to save himself some stitches, it might be better to forsake that $27-million-plus bonanza with an opponent even more capable of performing a fistic facial.

Although he insists he still is eager to test himself against the finest middleweight of this era, the fact remains that there is a clause in De La Hoya's contract that provides him with an out for the September 18 date. If he reconsiders and elects not to fight in September, Hopkins would receive $3-million as a parting gift.

"I can tell when a kid wants to do something and when he feels he's being forced to do it, and this is Oscar's call," said Arum, who is convinced De La Hoya will go ahead with a fight in which he will be the underdog for the first time.

Perhaps it is the oddity of those circumstances that will prod at De La Hoya's considerable ego enough to make him take his biggest chance ever against an opponent most experts believe he can not defeat.

"It's like I had a thousand pounds on my back, and now it's off," De La Hoya said of his unfamiliar role as a longshot. "It's all gone. Now I can do my thing."

It just remains to be seen what that thing is.

For all the nice things he has said about

De La Hoya for public consumption, Hopkins privately has confided to friends that his mission is not merely to beat The Golden Boy, but to beat him up. And it all starts with De La Hoya's nose, which occasionally has been bloodied but remains unbroken.

If anyone ever had a pugilist's probiscus, it was Doug DeWitt, the former middleweight whose career spanned from 1980 to '92. DeWitt's nose not only was misshapen after having been broken numerous times, it was practically submerged into his face, sort of like a car disappearing into a Florida sinkhole.

"I used to tell Dougie he had the ultimate badge of courage," said DeWitt's former manager, Stan Hoffman. "That nose made him look like a warrior, which is what he was. He always said he'd get it fixed after he retired, and he did. But I liked his old nose better."

Hopkins, whose nose falls somewhere between DeWitt's wreckage and De La Hoya's perfection, envisions De La Hoya exiting the ring with a drastically altered profile.

"Oscar has always been known for how handsome he is," Hopkins said. "I'm envious of him. His nose is straight. You can't go out like that.

"I mean, think about it. Nobody's really busted up Oscar. Nobody's knocked him out. But for all of his fans who admire his Clark Gable looks, they'd better take pictures of him now. It's going to be one of those before-and-after deals after I get through with him."

Figure on it happening just the way Hopkins describes. Oh, sure, the anti-Hopkins clique can recite all the reasons why Philadelphia's most consistent winner—even if the city still is crying over Smarty Jones' failure in the Belmont Stakes—will come up short in his stretch run against De La Hoya. He's too old (39), his legs are losing their spring and his punch already has lost its zip, and De La Hoya is more comfortable on the grand stage than is the true king of the middleweights. There are those who also suggest that Hopkins' threat to pull out of his third bout with Allen over the assignment of referee Joe Cortez indicates a propensity for skittishness if not career suicide. It took some serious lobbying by WBO president Paco Valcarcel, who is friendly with both Cortez and Hopkins, to forge a truce by which Cortez worked his first Hopkins bout after being replaced, at Hopkins' urging, for two other fights.

Even Allen, who has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that he is nowhere in Hopkins' class, figured De La Hoya would present Hopkins with problems he would be unable to solve.

"Oscar should beat Hopkins," Allen said. "Oscar's going to make it a point not to stand in front of Bernard. He's going to fight Bernard like he did Felix Trinidad, and that's going to be a problem for Bernard. He's going to use his legs and make it kind of a shutout. He's going to make the old man use *his* legs.

"And Bernard ain't punching as hard as he used to. I was surprised. He punched harder when I fought him five years ago. He's throwing a lot of punches, but there really wasn't a lot on them."

Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but let's just say that Allen's is a minority viewpoint.

Hopkins remains a physical anomaly, a man pushing 40 who has a 28-inch waist, a microscopic body-fat content, and the chiseled abdomen of a bodybuilder. De La Hoya, by comparison, looked soft and doughy against Sturm. He now has achieved his goal of winning belts in six weight classes, if you choose to recognize his latest alphabet trinket, but, like the trapped paratroopers vainly attempting to hold onto a strategic prize in Arnhem, Belgium, in Cornelius Ryan's classic World War II novel, moving up to 160 pounds may represent a bridge too far.

As Allen suggests, De La Hoya and his trainer, Floyd Mayweather Sr., almost certainly will plot a stick-and-move scenario against Hopkins. But at the heart of Hopkins' legend is his ability to force opponents to fight his fight, not theirs. There will be times when Hopkins can be expected to make De La Hoya fight at close range, where Hopkins' size and strength give him a decided advantage.

"Against Oscar, I'm not trying to get Fight of the Year; I want Fight of the Century," Hopkins said. "I want immortality."

Expect him to achieve it with a career-defining, eighth-round stoppage of De La Hoya that will exceed in scope and impact his battering of Trinidad. ■

Bernard Fernandez covers boxing for the Philadelphia Daily News and is a frequent contributor to this magazine.

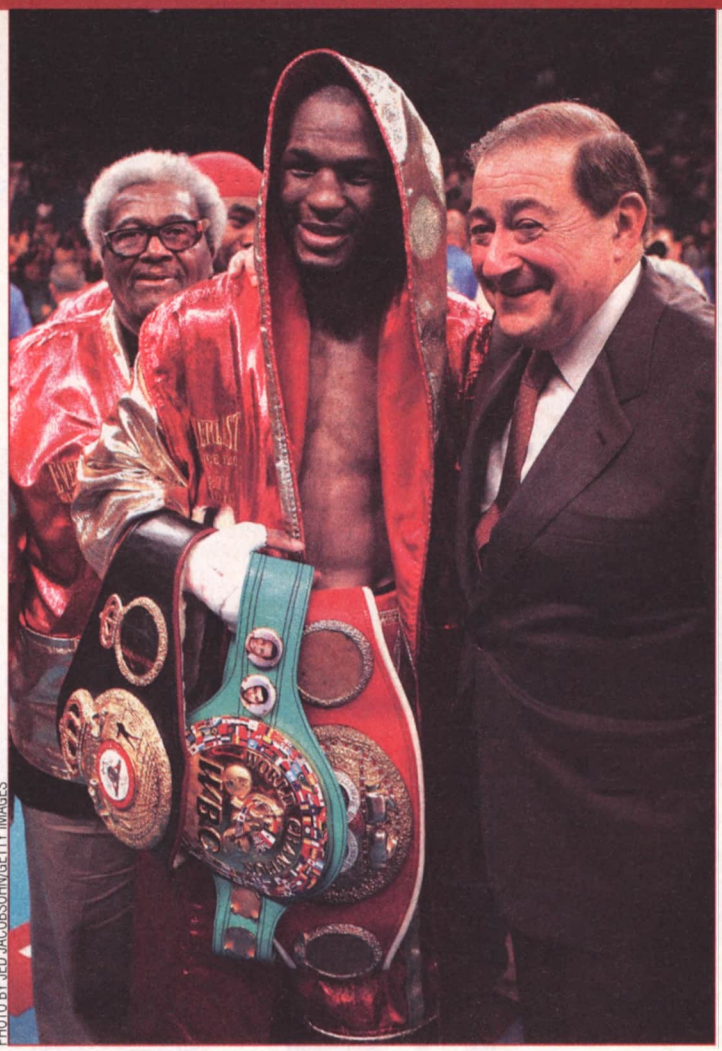


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Hopkins and promoter Bob Arum pose following Hopkins' decision over Allen. Besides the alphabet trinkets that Hopkins is holding, THE RING world championship belt will be on the line when Hopkins and De La Hoya collide.

A 'LIGHTS OUT' DAY IN LA-LA LAND

Taking a bite out of THE RING: Despite his feigned disdain for virtually all boxing writers, Toney actually gets a kick out of seeing his face on the cover of "The Bible Of Boxing."

James Toney Takes Us For A Ride

By Ivan Goldman

PHOTOS BY JAN SANDERS

Grousing about our inhuman working conditions, photographer Jan Sanders and I show up at an improbable spot to meet James "Lights Out" Toney. It's a yuppie gym in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles that offers valet parking and a supervised kids' play area for its botoxed, hot-waxed, Gucci-and-Pucci-addicted clientele.

This just doesn't figure. Toney fought his way out of the Detroit ghetto. And now he hangs out at Billy Blanks' Tae Bo gym? What are we supposed to believe next? That Rush Limbaugh is a dope fiend?

Toney is late, so we hang around outside the locked entrance with the affable Juan Gonzalez, a vital Team Toney member who, as it turns out, knows every shortcut in L.A. when it's time to zip through the kind of traffic that makes grown men weep.

"James just got the word yesterday," Gonzalez says. "He's 100 percent again. The team is coming back together."

Toney has been sidelined for months with a bum Achilles tendon that required surgery to fix, after he tore it training to fight Jameel McCline.

Forty minutes late, a Black Hummer the size of Wyoming pulls up and out pops Toney and his tank driver, John "Pops" Arthur, who's been with Toney for 10 years. Jan and I know Toney, so I'm not worried when he immediately begins threatening my health. Toney does this whenever he sees me. That's because in a column years ago I repeated somebody else's risque comment about his then-fat physique. James never forgets such a slight. He's one of the few fighters I've met who reads writers' bylines to mark them for subsequent harassment.

I shake his hand, and when I clasp his bicep with my left, it feels like copper piping. I'd been told he worked his upper body religiously throughout his layoff, and it feels terribly true.

Toney hops into his Hummer, where he would sit next to THE RING's Ivan Goldman (a.k.a. "Goldmember") and proceed to launch into one rant after another. Nobody is safe—including Goldman, who angered Toney years ago by poking fun at his unimpressive physique in a column.

"I guess you're planning to write some more lying crap about me," he says.

"That's why I'm here," I assure him.

We watch Sanders remove camera equipment from his car. When James fails to comment on the fact that it's an ancient, beat-up Honda Civic that hasn't been washed since the Clinton Administration, I realize he must like Sanders a lot.

It turns out this rendezvous point was chosen because Pops is a buddy of infomercial-famous Blanks and has a stake in the gym. Pops, general overseer of James' physical training and health, is a former cop who used to fight in mostly outlawed "sudden death" matches that have no rules, no rounds, and no referee. Before a match, Pops says, he used to sharpen his teeth.

Tragically, Pops was born wearing a cell phone that can't be surgically removed. Throughout the day, even while talking with people in front of him, Pops converses on the phone. He uses one of those hands-free setups that make users look like they're conversing with voices in their head.

With Gonzalez tooling down the celebrated Ventura Highway in Pops' tank, we head out for lunch. Pops insists on sitting in the luggage area behind the rear seat of his Hummer so the rest of us can sit two in front, two in back. This Hummer monstrosity has surprisingly little passenger space.

Toney, next to me in back, contends that Antonio Tarver is "terrible," and that Roy Jones was never that good. "And now Roy's embarrassed because he was knocked out by a bitch," he adds. Expanding the range of his insults, Toney claims "all these West Coast fighters are soft. They're all in P.C.—protective custody." Gyms out here, he maintains, are like kindergartens compared to the kill-or-be-killed gyms where he used to spar in Detroit.

Toney is an L.A. guy for business purposes only, and eventually plans to relocate with his family to Detroit or Las Vegas. Throughout the day he gleefully reminds everybody he encounters that the Detroit Pistons are kicking the Lakers' butts in the NBA finals.

I ask him if there are any other fighters out there whom he respects. He names junior welter Floyd Mayweather, who, he says, uses a similar style to his, and also stablemate Manny Pacquiao. Like Toney, Pac-Man trains with Freddie Roach in Roach's Wild Card Gym.

At this time, Roach is in Arizona training Mike Tyson for a match with presumed opponent Kevin McBride. I ask Toney which corner Freddie will choose if Tyson ever fights Toney.

"You should ask him that," Toney says. Good answer. Toney says Tyson informed Team Toney he needs three more fights before he would face James.

"Ninety-nine percent of heavyweights today haven't got an ounce of heart," Toney says.

I ask him to name more fighters he respects. He lists super middle Jeff Lacy and Jermain Taylor, but predicts Taylor will find life difficult when he encounters stronger middleweights.

"I like Arturo Gatti," he adds. "He's got guts. He's a fighter. And Fernando Vargas, he's got heart. He's gonna fight you."

He also names Bernard Hopkins, but adds, "I'm the only guy he ever ducked. That was the smartest thing he ever did. I wish I had more competition in the division," says Toney, who contends that very recently David Tua turned down $4-million to face him.

Wise old heads in the fight game say that although he only recently moved up to heavyweight, Toney, not champion Vitali Klitschko, might be the best in the division. Toney has created a frustrating style that allows him to slip and counter without expending much energy. At age 35, after 73 fights, he's still sharp.

Toney doesn't have good things to say about many fighters, but he likes featherweight champion Manny Pacquiao, pictured weighing in for his fight with Juan Manuel Marquez. Pac-Man is trained by Freddie Roach (far right), who also trains Toney.

Toney, John "Pops" Arthur (far left), Goldman, and Juan Gonzalez (right) stop for lunch at Jerry's Famous Deli in the San Fernando Valley. Unlike many celebrities, Toney enjoys mingling with fans and is at ease with his fame.

Gonzalez pulls into the lot of Jerry's Famous Deli in the Valley, where Team Toney hangs out almost daily. Toney is greeted warmly by employees and many seated customers. For a guy who dislikes L.A., he's made a lot of friends here.

I've seen plenty of celebrities at another Jerry's deli on the West Side. All of them shunned attention and were whisked to semi-incognito seating areas. Toney mingles and has a good time doing it. A unique, celebratory atmosphere surrounds him.

After we're seated and served, Toney starts on two main dishes, spaghetti and a large platter of broiled chicken slabs. I wonder if he's going to eat himself out of a career again. Though his first title was at middleweight, he once reached 275 pounds. But he eats only a third of his serving.

"He always does that," Pops says, "orders a bunch of food and then hardly eats any."

Back in the Hummer, we're headed over Laurel Canyon to the law office of Keith Davidson and Nick Khan in Beverly Hills.

"This will be a meeting of Team Toney," Pops says.

"I dare you to go faster," Toney chides Gonzalez. "There are no cops on this street. I promise you."

We're in steep descent into the Los Angeles basin on a narrow road in a 7,000-pound vehicle. Gonzalez laughs and obeys the speed limit.

I tell Toney he ought to buckle his seat belt. Naturally, he refuses. That's what killed Princess Di, I tell him. She was in the back seat and didn't buckle up.

"Do I look like Princess Di?" he asks.

I have to admit, there's only a slight resemblance.

We gather in Davidson's office. He and Khan explain they're employed to protect James' interests inside and outside the ring and to keep him earning after he retires from the ring. They formed Lights Out Boxing, an entity to co-promote James' fights along with Goossen-Tutor. They praise Dan Goossen for resurrecting James' career and say their relations with him are quite amicable.

As Toney's lawyers list solid and potential TV appearances in the works, Khan points out that this magazine recently listed him dead last in its evaluations of guest commentators on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*. Toney was gigged for talking too much about himself.

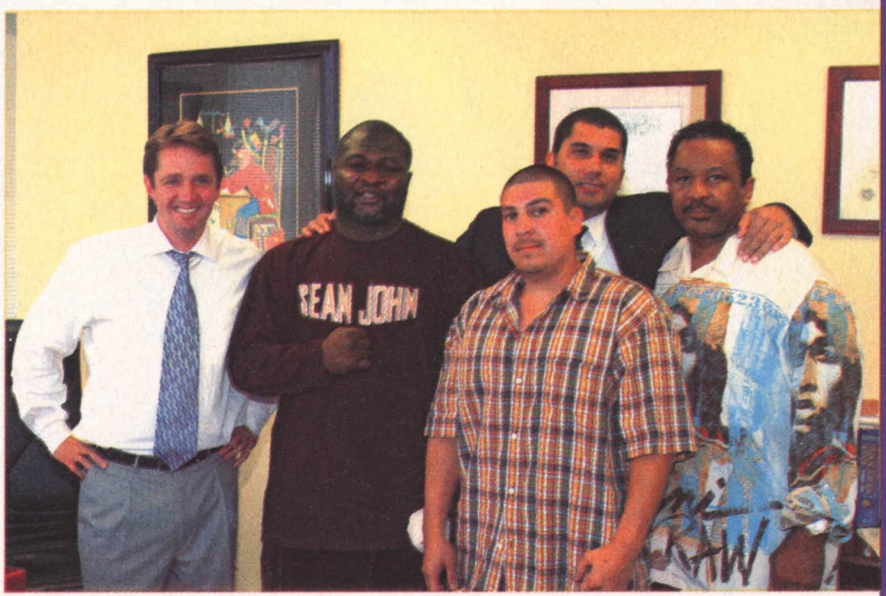
"Did you have anything to do with that, Goldmember?" Toney asks me. No, I assure him. I wasn't in on that one.

"Eric Raskin did it," Sanders says gleefully. I write Eric's cell phone number on a card and hand it to Toney. "Let's call him," says a smiling Davidson, who punches up the number on his speakerphone. Eric doesn't pick up and we get his message greeting.

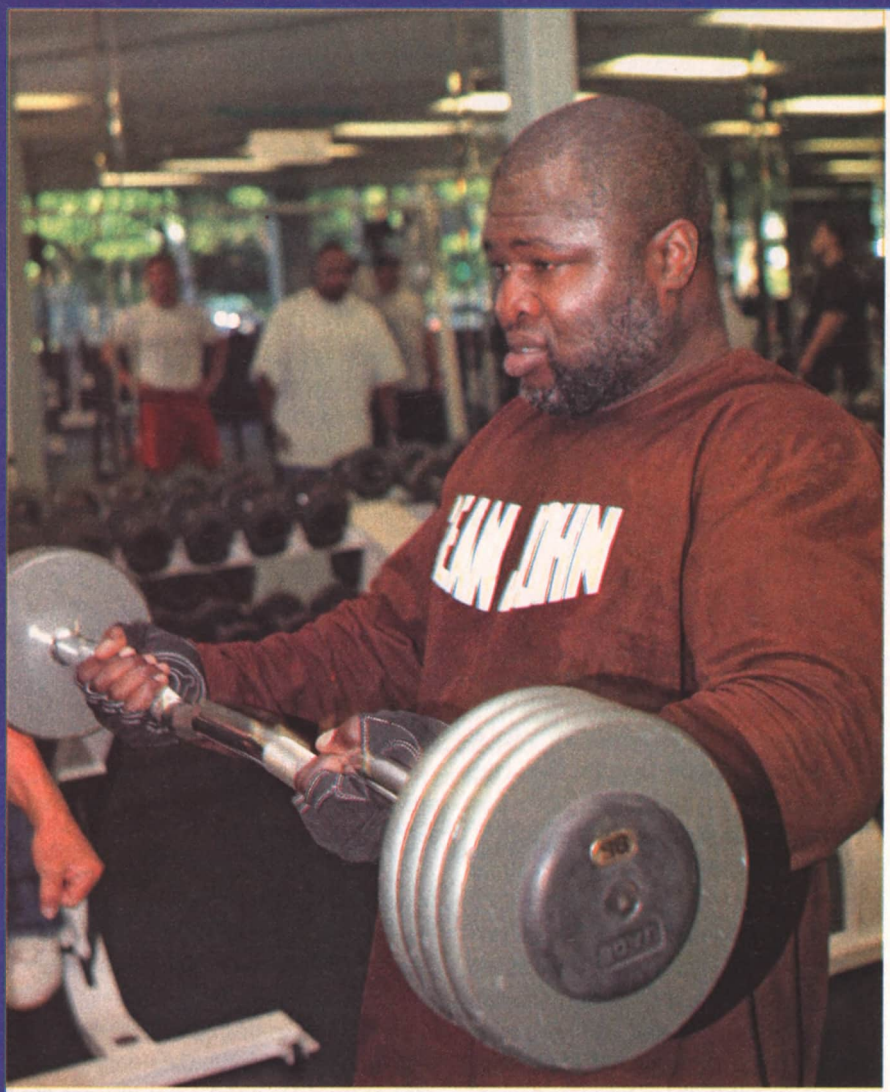
"I read your punk-ass piece," Toney growls. "When I see you, you got a problem, you damn coward."

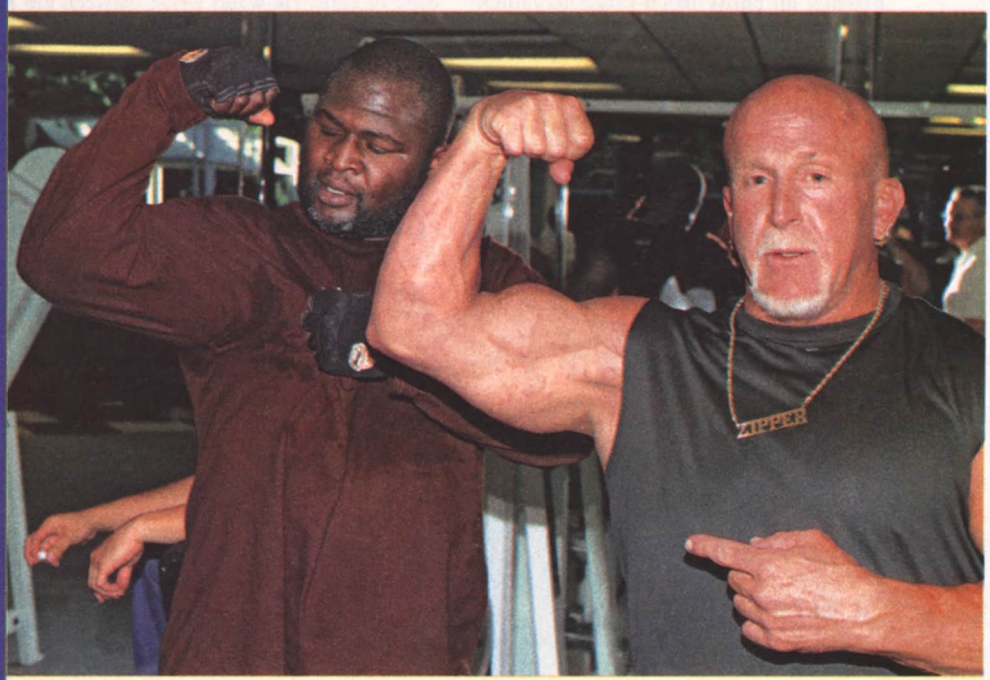
I'm not sure how well Eric knows James, and I make a mental note to inform him he doesn't have to buy a one-way ticket to Paraguay, because Toney won't really knock him upside his head.

Toney is like that tiger Siegfried and Roy thought was tame. He's only on the edge of tame. He walks a line between the code of the street and love of fun. He also



Toney poses with members of his team. From left to right: Keith Davidson, Toney, Gonzalez, Nick Khan (behind Gonzalez), and Arthur. Davidson and Khan are lawyers who help protect the fighter's business interests and hope to make him a crossover star with staying power beyond boxing.





Toney hasn't been just sitting on his butt and eating since suffering an ankle injury. He's worked hard at conditioning his upper body (top) under the guidance of Mike "The Zipper" Sable, pictured showing off the sort of guns Toney claims to have under his sweatshirt (above).

really enjoys people. But put him somewhere near another fighter, and his jive-talk could slip into something ugly.

Davidson and Khan outline their strategy to capitalize on Toney's wit and personality to make him a crossover star with staying power. I have no doubt they believe what they're saying. But over the years I've heard different functionaries make, almost word for word, the same spiel about other fighters. And it's never worked. When fighters hang up their gloves, the general public will likely forget them and go on to the next fighter. The best thing they can do is figure out how to preserve what they've earned and not count on pie in the sky.

We pile back into the Hummer and exit the Beverly Hills lot that costs $1.75 every 15 minutes. Pops complains he has a hard time keeping sparring partners for Toney because he's so merciless. I ask Toney why he doesn't cut them slack.

"You ease up on them," he says, "and they start talking s--- about you. That's what you get for being soft with people."

Later, I realize I should have replied that as long as he prevails in competition, what's the difference if sparring partners make silly claims? But that's life. You figure out what to say when the conversation is over.

After filling the Hummer tank for $68.50, we end up at another fancy yuppie gym in the Valley with weight machines and other apparatuses as far as the eye can see. Toney seems to know everyone here. Personal trainer Mike "The Zipper" Sable, a former Mr. Universe and Mr. World, puts James through a series of agonizing weight routines without rest. Sable, who looks like a buff Dwight Eisenhower in a goatee, takes Toney to the limit with countless repetitions. Toney will return to a full fighter's workout in the Wild Card after he has a fight scheduled.

We travel back to the Tae Bo gym parking lot to retrieve vehicles and go our separate ways. We all pledge to meet up at Toney's next fight, when once again he will have to make good on all his trash talk. I wouldn't bet against it. ■

Ivan Goldman is THE RING's West Coast correspondent.

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LIGHTWEIGHT KING

JOSE LUIS CASTILLO

Castillo hammers Lazcano with a left (above) and a right (opposite page) during their punishing battle for the vacant lightweight championship. It was hard fought from first bell to last, but Castillo's more damaging punches proved the difference, and he came away with a unanimous decision and THE RING *belt.*

PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

With Mayweather Gone, Can Anybody Stop Him?

By Don Stradley

It's been easy to lose track of Jose Luis Castillo since he doesn't speak English and doesn't have a promotional hype machine trumpeting his every move. Fortunately for fight fans, Castillo's idea of a good p.r. stunt is to come out of the shadows every now and then to beat up the number-one contender. That's what he did on June 5 on the undercard of the "Collision Course" pay-per-view when he defeated Juan Lazcano to claim the vacant lightweight championship, as well as his place among the best lightweights of the era.

After 12 gritty rounds, Lazcano looked as if he'd been worked over by a street gang. His eyes were hammered almost shut, his nose fractured in three places, and his forehead was decorated with lumps the size of Jimmy Dean sausage patties. When the final bell sounded, "The Hispanic Causing Panic" glowered at Castillo as if he wanted to continue the fight in the parking lot of the MGM Grand. Instead, he went to the hospital to have his damaged face tended to while Castillo celebrated in the ring.

This wasn't the way things were supposed to go down. Lazcano was coming off an impressive win over Stevie Johnston and was a fighter on the rise, while Castillo had fought in obscurity since losing a pair of close decisions to Floyd Mayweather in 2002. He'd also porked up to welterweight for his last three fights and was rumored to have a bum hand. Lazcano had said of Castillo, "He's down to his last bullets."

But anyone who saw Castillo knock out Derrick Parks with a single left hook to the temple on Telefutura's *Solo Boxeo*, or the way he splattered Saul Duran's nose four months earlier, knew Castillo still had plenty of ammunition. Bernardo Osuna, one of *Solo Boxeo's* on-air commentators, thought Castillo would do well

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Castillo plants a right hand square on Lazcano's left eye. A lot of people had written off Castillo after his second fight with Floyd Mayweather, but the veteran proved that he still has a lot left and will be tough to beat at 135 pounds. He does not, however, plan on staying at lightweight much longer.

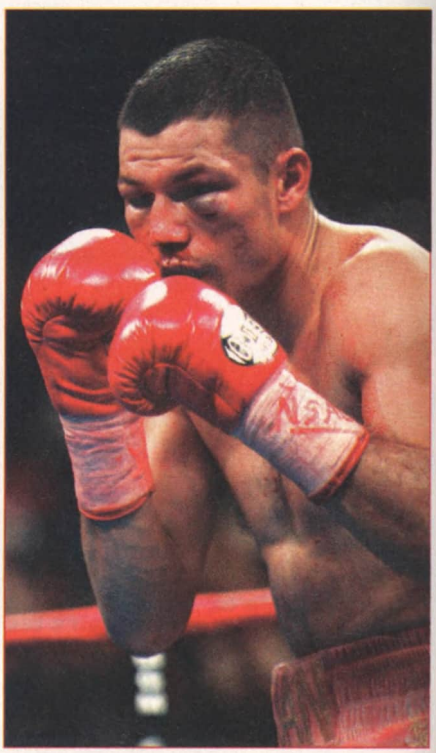
against Lazcano because of his edge in experience.

"Castillo had been in with the best opposition, including the two fights with Mayweather," said Osuna. "No matter what kind of brilliance Lazcano brought to the ring, he wasn't as fast Mayweather. Castillo told me he was hungry to get back into the big money fights, so he was motivated."

The fight was a reminder of the way boxing used to be. There were no mega paydays at stake and no undefeated records to protect. There were just two figures in a ring, battling each other for the right to be called champion. Joe Goossen, who was working Lazcano's corner for the first time, had much praise for Castillo.

"He's got a rock-solid chin," Goossen said, noting that Castillo hasn't been off his feet in 57 pro fights. "He's relaxed in the ring; that's what makes him able to

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO



Lazcano fought hard all the way and scored well at times with solid shots (above), but as the bout progressed his face became badly battered and both eyes were swollen almost shut by Castillo's relentless bombardment (right). Lazcano was taken to the hospital afterward.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

IBF titleholder Julio "The Kidd" Diaz, pictured en route to a seventh-round kayo of Ernesto Zepeda in March 2003, would make a worthy challenger for world champion Castillo.

come on in the late rounds. He makes you struggle with him a little because he's cagey and loose. He's very good at maneuvering his body and stifling a lot of what you're trying to do. He's very good defensively and he has a tremendous punch. He's also very big for a lightweight."

The match didn't get off to a rousing start, as both men fought cautiously during the first two rounds, causing the anxious Las Vegas crowd to jeer. During the third round, however, Castillo decided he'd learned all he needed to know about Lazcano, and went on the attack.

Even though Lazcano, 33-3-1 (25), held his own in many exchanges, he returned to his corner after each round looking the worse for wear, causing the usually calm Goossen to urge Lazcano to fight harder because many of the rounds were close. Lazcano got the best of rounds seven and eight, but when he knocked an off-balance Castillo into the ropes in round nine, it seemed to wake up "El Terrible" just in time for the stretch drive.

Castillo swarmed over Lazcano in the 10th and 11th, blasting him with uppercuts and hooks to the body. When Lazcano tried to backpedal away from harm, Castillo pelted him with long rights to the head. HBO's Jim Lampley described Castillo's attack as a "vicious cauldron of pressure." Hyperbole is expected from Lampley, but the description was accurate. Lazcano was never in danger of going down, but Castillo was overwhelming him with moves reminiscent of the man he once worked for as a sparring partner, Julio Cesar Chavez.

Unable to breathe properly because of his fractured nose, Lazcano fought gamely in the final round, but his brave stand barely fazed the iron-skulled Mexican. Judge Adelaide Byrd (USA) didn't appreciate Lazcano's work, scoring the fight 117-111 for Castillo. Duane Ford (USA) and Dalby Shirley (USA) also scored the fight for Castillo, but more accurately, at 116-112 and 115-113, respectively. THE RING scored the fight for Castillo, 116-113.

Going into the match, the lightweight championship was vacant because Floyd Mayweather had relinquished the title to campaign as a junior welterweight. But as luck would have it, Lazcano was THE RING's number-one contender, while Castillo was number two, which made it a perfect pairing to fill the vacancy under the magazine's championship policy.

So what's next for the new champ?

According to Osuna, there has already been talk of Castillo meeting IBF titlist Julio Diaz, a fighter whose career was on the fast track before a pair of losses to Angel Manfredy and Juan Valenzuela slowed his progress. A Castillo-Diaz bout almost took place last year, before Castillo pulled out with an injury. Top Rank's Todd DuBoef admitted later that he didn't think Diaz was ready at the time to face a world-class fighter such as Castillo, but since then Diaz has knocked out top-10 rated Courtney Burton, plus turned in a good performance outpointing Javier

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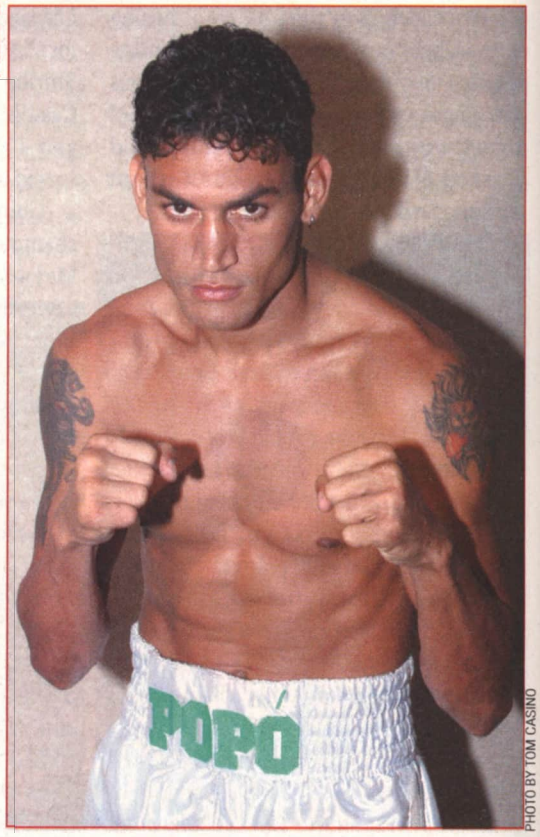


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Diego Corrales, pictured knocking down Joel Casamayor in October 2003 (above), is set to tangle with hard-hitting Acelino Freitas (right) in August. The winner versus Castillo would be a great match and a major attraction.

Jauregui for the IBF belt. But if Diaz is now ready for Castillo, he'd better move quickly.

"Castillo only plans to fight at lightweight a few times, for some good money, and then go to 140 to seek another match with Mayweather," said Osuna.

The dream opponent for Castillo at 135 would be the winner of the August showdown between Acelino Freitas and Diego Corrales. But neither Freitas nor Corrales will be available immediately after fighting each other, so while Castillo waits, he may have to defend against one or more of the remaining ranked lightweights.

When Mayweather bolted for the 140-pound class, he left behind a rag-tag division of colorful veterans and young contenders. Many of them would provide Castillo with interesting fights, if not big paydays.

Houston's Juan "The Baby Bull" Diaz has the sort of style that would create fireworks against Castillo. But Diaz has to first get past WBA titleholder Lakva Sim, whom he challenges on July 17. If Sim retains by beating a hyped young star like Diaz, then he would become an attractive challenger for Castillo.

Veterans Julien Lorcy and Artur Grigorian are in THE RING's top 10, but wouldn't help Castillo in his quest for cash. A more promising opponent might be Castillo's old rival Stevie Johnston. Their first two fights were very close, with Castillo winning a decision in June 2002, and Johnston holding him to a draw three months later. Even so, Johnston needs at least one solid comeback win over a worthy opponent to make a third fight with Castillo marketable.

Jauregui can't be completely forgotten, either. His record of 47-11-2 (34) may seem like a journeyman's numbers, but he's still ranked highly because of his recent knockouts of Leavander Johnson and Juan Gomez Trinidad. And let's not forget that Jauregui also has two TKO vic-

tories over Castillo from their younger days when Castillo was prone to cut. True, Jauregui wouldn't bring Castillo a monster payday, but the new champ might like a chance to avenge those early defeats.

If Castillo can't find a big-money opponent among the current 135-pound crop, perhaps 130-pound titlist Erik Morales might step up to challenge him. While Morales would be giving away size, a bout between two fighters known as "El Terrible" would be juicy. The only problem is that Morales' brain trust sees him as a mini-Oscar De La Hoya who always deserves more dough than his opponents. Unfortunately, the same is probably true of Freitas and, to a lesser degree, Corrales, which could mean Castillo may only get these big fights if he takes the low end of the purse.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Juan Diaz digs a right to Francisco Lorenzo's ribs. If Diaz can get past dangerous Lakva Sim in July, the Houston native would become another possible foe for Castillo. If Sim wins, he would also qualify, but the Mongolian wouldn't be as appealing to U.S. television as well-publicized prospect Diaz.

Right now, despite the fan-friendly nature of their first fight, a rematch with Lazcano is unrealistic unless Lazcano regroups and scores a significant win. Still, Castillo's record in return bouts is 0-2-1, which is certainly something to think about if he ever faces Lazcano again.

"I'm sure he'd love to have a rematch," Goossen said of Lazcano, "because you learn a lot from one fight. He fell a little short on executing some of the things we'd worked on in the gym, but he still fought at a championship level. How many people survive slugging it out with Castillo?"

Even Castillo applauded Lazcano's efforts.

"Once I leave this division to fight at 140, Lazcano will be the legitimate champion in this weight class," Castillo said.

It's a shame that Castillo isn't staying at lightweight for the long haul, but if anyone has earned the right to chase a big payday at 140 against Mayweather, Kostya Tszyu, or Arturo Gatti, it would be Castillo.

Originally from Empalme, a town of 60,000 in Sonora, Mexico, Castillo was 30-3 as an amateur before moving to Mexicali at age 17 to pursue his professional career.

"Mexicali is border town near Baja California," said Osuna. "It's close to Tijuana, a great place for boxing. It's a springboard for fighters, and a proving ground. If you can fight in 130-degree weather, you can do it anywhere."

As is common for Mexican fighters, Castillo, 50-6-1 (45), took a lot of fights against weak opposition just to stay active, but for every Verdell Smith on his ledger, there are also wins over Cesar Bazan, Steve Quinonez, Jorge Paez, and Castillo's first claim to fame, his 2000 WBC title win over Johnston, which was chosen as THE RING's Upset of the Year. Moreover, had the judges of his first fight with Mayweather taken note of his body attack, Castillo's name would undoubtedly be mentioned today alongside the other great Mexican warriors of this era. Furthermore, after the first loss to Mayweather, Castillo was chosen as THE RING's Fighter of the Month, a rare accolade for a fighter on the losing end of a decision. So it's not as if Castillo is an unknown commodity; it's just that he does things without fanfare.

When Telefutura brought their camera crew into Castillo's training camp for a feature story, he gladly talked about boxing, but balked at answering personal questions. Sewn into Castillo's trunks is the name "Mercedes," a tribute to his younger sister who died of leukemia in 2001, but aside from that gesture of affection, we know very little about him. The bits of personal information that have surfaced reveal Castillo to be a traditional family man with an earthy sense of humor, as evidenced by his description of Mexicali as "a place where the devil goes for a vacation."

Married with two children, Castillo spends his free time supporting his favorite winter league baseball team, The Mexicali Eagles. He takes batting practice with the team and occasionally sits on their bench in full uniform.

"They like me being there, just in case a fight breaks out," Castillo said.

Whoever challenges Castillo next should borrow some lumber from the Eagles' bat rack, because a motivated Castillo will be hard to stop. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Rockport, Massachusetts, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

One Shot Away

Verno Phillips Is Ready To Be Sworn In As A Superstar

By Ted Bodenrader

PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

When you're the president of your domain, everyone knows your name. They know everything from your business to your background, and they seem to know it well. It is often the *vice* president who slips so subtly under the radar.

Today, Verno Phillips may have finally become that very thing, the V.P. of the junior middleweight division, for reasons other than his initials. If the reigning leader at 154 pounds is undeniably Ronald "Winky" Wright, many believe that second in command is the understated Phillips, a longtime soldier with an impeccable string of service.

Through 16 years in the business of hard knocks, Phillips' credentials are as solid as his fists, his resume glittering with such gems as Bronco McKart (W 10), Julian Jackson (KO 9), Gianfranco Rosi (No-Contest 12, W 12), Santos Cardona (W 12, W 12), Godfrey Nyakana (KO 11), Julio "The Cuban Lover" Garcia (KO 1), and Shibata Flores (W 10). But when you share an office with some of the game's most marketable moguls, your due compensation can often be a long time coming.

"I've always been in a situation where no matter what I do, it just won't be enough," said Phillips, 38-8-1 (20) with 1 no-contest. "Respect is something that the other guy gets. It's never belonged to me."

Just ask Phillips and he can tell you what it's been like to share office space with the likes of Oscar De La Hoya, Shane Mosley, and Fernando Vargas. He knows how it feels to watch the younger, flashier colleagues climb the ladder at a more rapid and lucrative clip. Mosley and Vargas, however, have been knocked down a rung or two lately, Mosley with his March loss at the hands of Wright, and Vargas with his 2002 demise against De La Hoya.

Currently, Phillips, quietly riding a seven-fight winning streak, is on deck for a juicy payday. Yet, even as he nailed down his most recent task, an engaging sixth-round stoppage of pesky Carlos Bojorquez in Joplin, Missouri, all eyes were cocked somewhere else—somewhere roughly 1,300 miles west.

At the very same time Phillips was mincing up his Mexican adversary that June night with stinging combinations, De La Hoya's middleweight debut was being met with surprisingly stale reviews. In the flashy settings of Las Vegas, "The Golden Boy" struggled to glisten against unheralded Felix Sturm.

Nonetheless, few were talking about Verno Phillips when the sun came up the next morning. They weren't talking about his one-sided slaughtering that forced Bojorquez to quit on his stool at the end of round six. And they weren't contemplating his impending showdowns with 154-pound foes.

"I'm sure, as usual, everybody was talking about Oscar," Phillips said with an agonized sigh. "For me? No, it's been quiet, very quiet. Aside from a couple of phone calls from

The 34-year-old Phillips was finally rewarded for all the years of disappointment and hardship when he dispatched overmatched Carlos Bojorquez in the sixth round (opposite page) to win the vacant IBF 154-pound title (above).

Phillips, who has campaigned in Argentina, England, and Italy, as well as the United States, during his 16 years as a pro, finally won his first title in the unlikely location of Joplin, Missouri.

friends, I haven't been bothered much by anyone."

Such has been life for the 34-year-old Phillips, a hardened practitioner with all the goods, but few of the spoils. He has worked hard in this business for more than a decade-and-a-half, and has taken away neither the fame nor the fortune that should come with such an impressive run. And so, like any other disgruntled pug, Phillips will remind you of all the ill fortunes and political injustices that have muddled his murky path. He'll tell you all about the prickly promoters and alphabet scoundrels that have made this adventure a most arduous one.

Still, eight professional losses can throw a wrench or two into the mix, especially when four of them came inside of his first 12 bouts. To many, it was a career that was marred from the very start.

"I only wish earlier in my career I had taken it as seriously as I'm taking it now," said Phillips. "I spent too much time back then screwing around with other things. If I had the proper guidance, and trained up in Big Bear [California], and did everything I should have done, I'd be unstoppable. I'd be as big a name as Fernando, Winky, or Oscar. People always told me that I didn't really know how good I was. Now, I'm starting to believe them."

Even if Phillips isn't convinced of his own abilities, anyone who watched the Showtime telecast of the Bojorquez fight is. The way he tore through Bojorquez like tissue paper, it was a spectacle, to say the least. But while Phillips had already lurked for a decade as a lethal but quiet presence, he may have finally come into his own in the ever-budding division.

"I feel now that I've reached my short-term goal," said Phillips. "I wanted to get my career back to a respectable level where people knew I was back as one of the best."

It is a place he hasn't been since 1998, when he rattled off four straight wins, including a sizzling ninth-round drubbing of Julian Jackson. With a seemingly fertile future ahead, Phillips instead fell victim to the grim settings of Troy, New York, where trouble lurked around every corner.

"The streets back home got to me," said Phillips, who protects his image as carefully as he guards his chin. "I got into some trouble after that fight, but that's all in the past now. I've moved on from it and left it all behind."

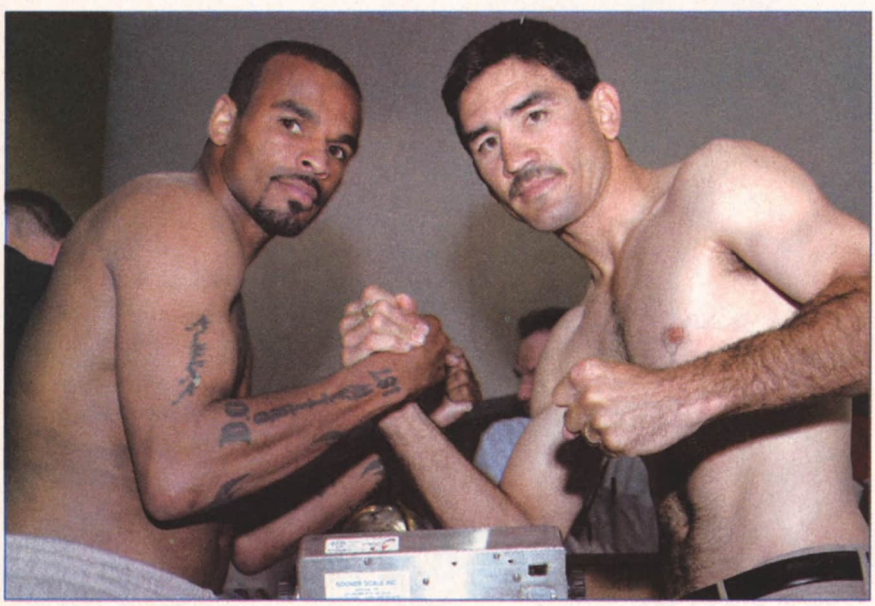
True, Phillips left any personal turmoil back on the streets of Troy as he moved into the quaint settings of Aurora, Colorado, in 1998. But the move also marked the beginning of a 2½-year career coma, during which Phillips thought long and hard about administering a TKO to his boxing future.

"I pretty much gave up on it," he admitted. "I decided I was going to look for a job doing something else, maybe working in an office or something."

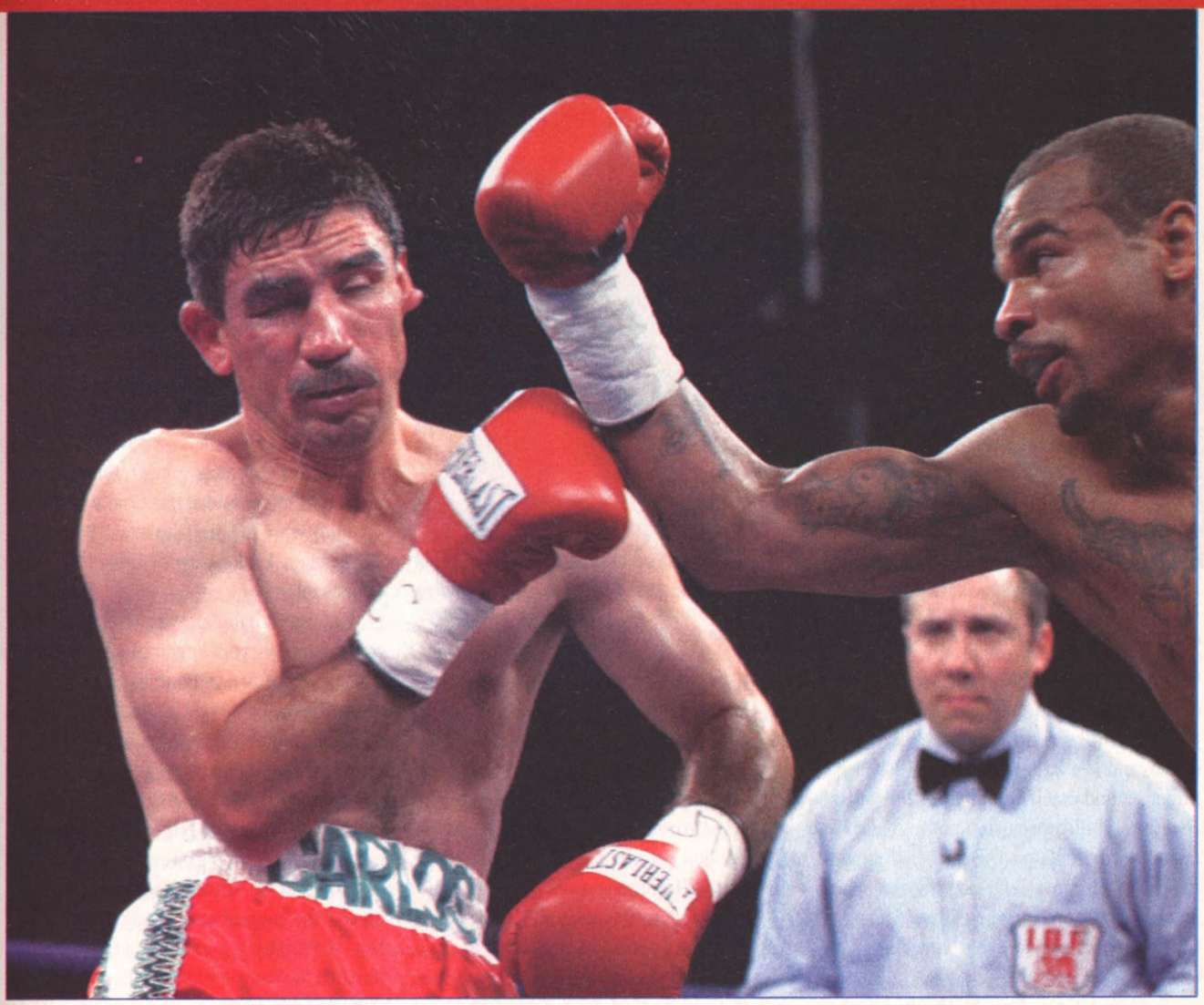
Even so, something inside Phillips drew him back to the grungy sweatshops like a high-powered magnet. Although boxing had no longer been his 9-to-5 gig, he found himself back in the only office he's ever known, the kind where "punching in" takes on a very literal meaning. During that time, he put in long, taxing shifts, preparing up-and-comers like David Reid for their upcoming endeavors.

"I was sparring with a lot of young fighters, getting them ready for their shows," Phillips said. "And the sad thing was that I was putting a whipping on a lot of them. People started asking me why I wasn't the one getting ready for the big fight."

After hearing that kind of thing one time too many, Phillips decided to go back to the only occupation he ever knew. That same day, he called Ron Katz, his old matchmaker, and announced that after a 28-month hia-



When original opponent Kassim Ouma hurt his back in training, late sub Bojorquez was brought in to fight Phillips on just five days notice. The Mexican clubfighter is best known as the man who stopped Pernell Whitaker in "Sweet Pea's" final pro fight.



Phillips bounces a right hand off Bojorquez' noggin en route to an easy TKO victory, as referee Mark Nelson looks on. Bojorquez showed plenty of courage, but really didn't belong in a title bout, even one of the alphabet variety. It was Phillips' seventh straight victory.

tus, he was indeed "ready to go." When he did, Phillips was met with a long, awkward silence from the other end.

"At first, he didn't know who I was," joked Phillips. "When he finally did, he said, 'Man, what happened to you? I thought you were dead.'"

It didn't take long for Katz—or the rest of the 154-pound division—to discover the contrary, as Phillips whacked out Vincent Moses in five rounds in the summer of 2000. And with that, Phillips had delved straight back into a business where things rarely made sense to him, a place where bad is sometimes good and good can be your greatest downfall.

But one thing he understands is that he's not alone in such a world. With wife Amy vehemently at his side, his spouse/manager helps to contain the inferno within Verno. In fact, when it comes to his fistic affairs, nobody is as fiery as Phillips' better half.

"Verno has been in this business a lot longer than De La Hoya or [Felix] Trinidad has," she pointed out. "All of them, Winky Wright, Mosley, [Kassim] Ouma, what were they all doing back when Verno started fighting pro? But nobody ever talks about that. They never talk about all the things Verno has done. And the worst part is that nobody has ever paid him what he deserves. It's a disgrace."

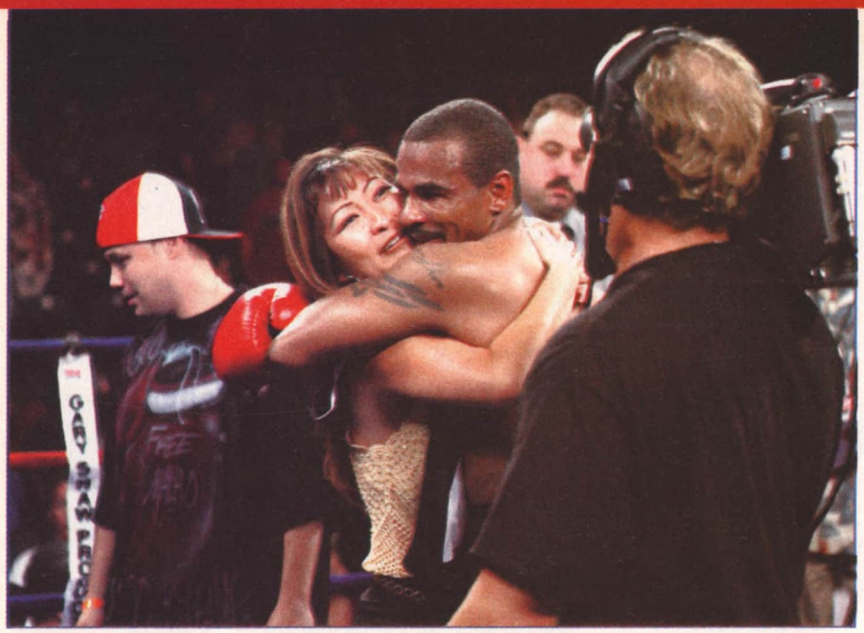
The $150,000 he pocketed for a 1995 showdown with Rosi still stands as Phillips' heftiest payday to date. However, the split decision loss (later changed to a no-contest when Rosi failed a postfight drug test) is hardly his most memorable fight. That distinction belongs to Phillips' September 2001 clash with Ouma, with whom he waged the kind of war that knocked CompuBox's punch stat records straight off the charts.

"I had never heard of Kassim Ouma and never saw him fight before that night," recalled Phillips, who ended up on the short end of the judges' scorecards, losing a 10-round unanimous decision. "I took the fight on just 10 days notice. I didn't even know he was a southpaw until the opening bell rang."

While the dynamic display left fans demanding an immediate rematch, Phillips went home without the victory he had yearned for. And the measly $7,000 he pocketed for the night's work would disappear like, well, magic.

"That was the best fight of the year," barked Amy. "And that was the lowest payday of his life. Seven thousand dollars! That's a joke. You tell me there isn't something wrong with that."

What stung even more was what happened in the months that followed. As



Phillips embraces his wife, Amy, following the Bojorquez victory. Mrs. Phillips is now managing her husband's career and fiercely protecting his business interests. Both are counting on bigger paydays than the $75,000 he earned for the Bojorquez fight for his next outing.

Ouma's star quickly took flight, Phillips continued to tread stagnantly through the junior middleweight waters. When word came around this spring that he'd be getting a second crack at Ouma for the vacant IBF title, Phillips was sure not to make the mistakes of fights past. He trained strenuously for Ouma's lefty workhorse style, and planned on using the rugged Ugandan as a steppingstone to even bigger and better things.

Just five days before the big fight, Phillips was sitting in a barber's chair, getting his locks trimmed for the Showtime appearance. In just a little more than an hour, he'd be catching a plane to Missouri.

"That was when my wife called," recalled Phillips. "She told me that I wasn't getting Ouma after all, that he was injured, and that I'd be fighting somebody else instead."

But Phillips refused to allow the frustration of Ouma's spinal injury to rattle him. Instead, he directed his focus toward the replacement, Bojorquez, a rough customer who once put a hurting on an aging Pernell Whitaker.

As things turned out, the real enemy wasn't Bojorquez at all. The Mexican mauler was no match for the swift fists of Phillips, who ripped through him with an incessant body attack, then finished him off at the end of round six with a left hook to the ribs and a straight right to the temple. Rather, the real nemesis was HBO, whose pay-per-view doubleheader featuring De La Hoya and Bernard Hopkins, on the same night as Phillips-Bojorquez, would easily eclipse Phillips' latest feat. Still, Phillips plans to capitalize on his newfound drive, hoping it will result in paydays that surpass the $75,000 he pocketed for the Bojorquez affair.

"We're going to make it big," assured Amy. "Verno is hungrier and more focused than he's ever been. He's fighting better than he ever has. In a year or two, we're going to be talked about in the same breath as Oscar and Winky."

Sometimes the best way to become a big name in boxing is to beat one, as Antonio Tarver proved in May by reducing Roy Jones to a heap of vulnerability with one left-handed swipe. The other means to stardom, of course, is the Micky Ward way, which is to pump the sport full of so much high-octane that fans demand more of the same.

Residing in a division that is a haven for superstars and seven-figure scores, Phillips knows he is capable of both. And as soon as Ouma is healed, there's no better place to start than a rematch that promises heavy servings of both thrill and skill.

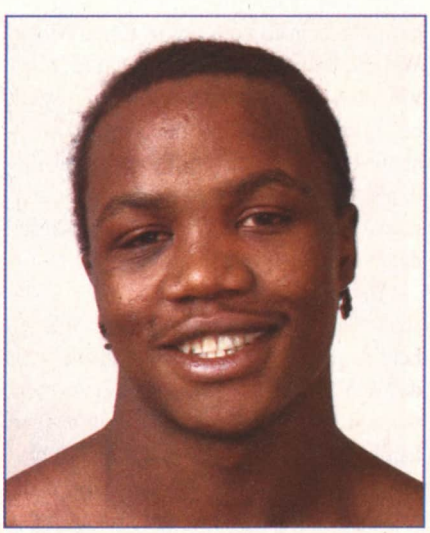
"That's the fight I really want," Phillips said of the likely fall showdown. "I want to take care of business with Ouma because he caught me at a loss last time when I had no idea who the hell he was. I do now. Then when I take care of him, I'm going after Winky."

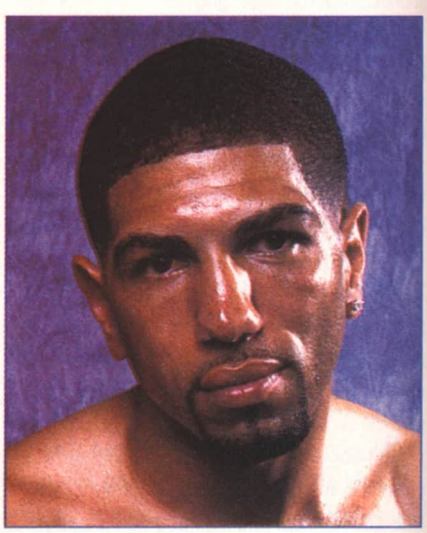
Having already proven that he and his career are still very much alive, Phillips is determined to persevere until he reaches his ultimate goal.

"I ain't hanging them up anytime soon," promised the long-suffering veteran. "When the time has come, and I know I need to walk away, I'll do it. Right now, I'm peaking. This is my time to shine."

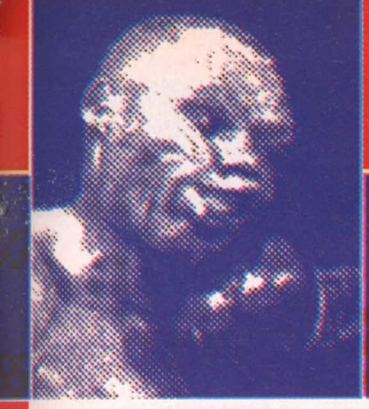
Whether he shines brightly enough to unseat the incumbent remains to be seen, but if Phillips gets past Ouma in the rematch, nobody could deny he is worthy of taking a run at the top spot on the junior middleweight ticket. ■

Ted Bodenrader is a freelance writer based in Massachusetts and a regular contributor to this magazine.





The men on Phillips' immediate hit list are original opponent Ouma (left), who outpointed him in a thriller back in 2001, and world junior middleweight champion Winky Wright.



One Punch & It's Over!

A half-century of memorable knockouts

By Gavin Evans

One-punch knockouts epitomize boxing's compelling appeal—the decisive, chilling, unpredictable end that cancels all that precedes it. Whether in the opening seconds of the first round (Muhammad Ali-Sonny Liston II) or the dying moments of the last (Mike Weaver-John Tate), it is invariably shocking to see, and a talking point for long afterward. But when you watch from ringside, the immediate conversation often reflects confusion. "What happened? He just seemed to collapse? Did you see the punch? Was it a left or a right?" The full appreciation only starts to settle when the replays are watched, and if the fight is big enough, the punch is promoted into the stuff of legend.

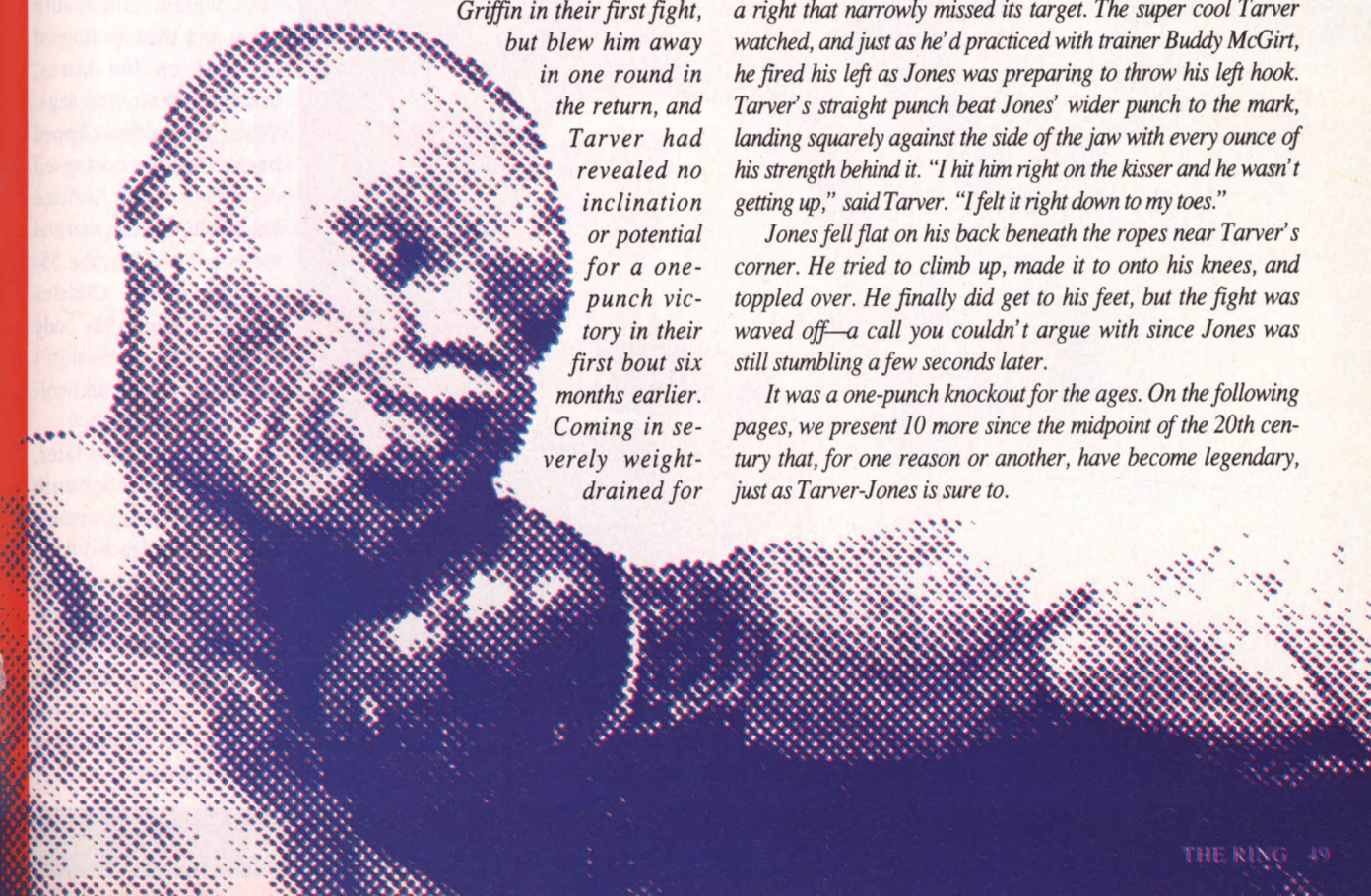
Antonio Tarver's blowout of Roy Jones is the perfect example. The general view was that if anyone won early it would be Jones. After all, he struggled against Montell Griffin in their first fight, but blew him away in one round in the return, and Tarver had revealed no inclination or potential for a one-punch victory in their first bout six months earlier. Coming in severely weight-drained for their first encounter, Jones managed to absorb 12 rounds of Tarver's best without a wobble and emerged a majority decision winner. This time, Jones made the weight with more ease and knew what to expect from the tall, rangy southpaw. Tarver, however, seemed unnaturally confident. When referee Jay Nady asked if there were any questions before they touched gloves, Tarver replied: "You got any excuses tonight, Roy?"

The quicker, more aggressive Jones won the first round on all three cards, confidently landing left hooks and lead rights to both head and body, while pursuing his quarry around the ring. Tarver's contribution was a flicking right jab that invariably missed.

But the underdog showed a different attitude in round two, starting with a stiff left to the body from ring center. Jones shot out two quick rights, both missing, and Tarver replied with a hard left to the head. The veteran champion did not sense danger and threw an impressive burst of quick punches, including a right that narrowly missed its target. The super cool Tarver watched, and just as he'd practiced with trainer Buddy McGirt, he fired his left as Jones was preparing to throw his left hook. Tarver's straight punch beat Jones' wider punch to the mark, landing squarely against the side of the jaw with every ounce of his strength behind it. "I hit him right on the kisser and he wasn't getting up," said Tarver. "I felt it right down to my toes."

Jones fell flat on his back beneath the ropes near Tarver's corner. He tried to climb up, made it to onto his knees, and toppled over. He finally did get to his feet, but the fight was waved off—a call you couldn't argue with since Jones was still stumbling a few seconds later.

It was a one-punch knockout for the ages. On the following pages, we present 10 more since the midpoint of the 20th century that, for one reason or another, have become legendary, just as Tarver-Jones is sure to.



One Punch & It's Over!

A half-century of memorable knockouts

Jersey Joe Walcott KO 7 Ezzard Charles

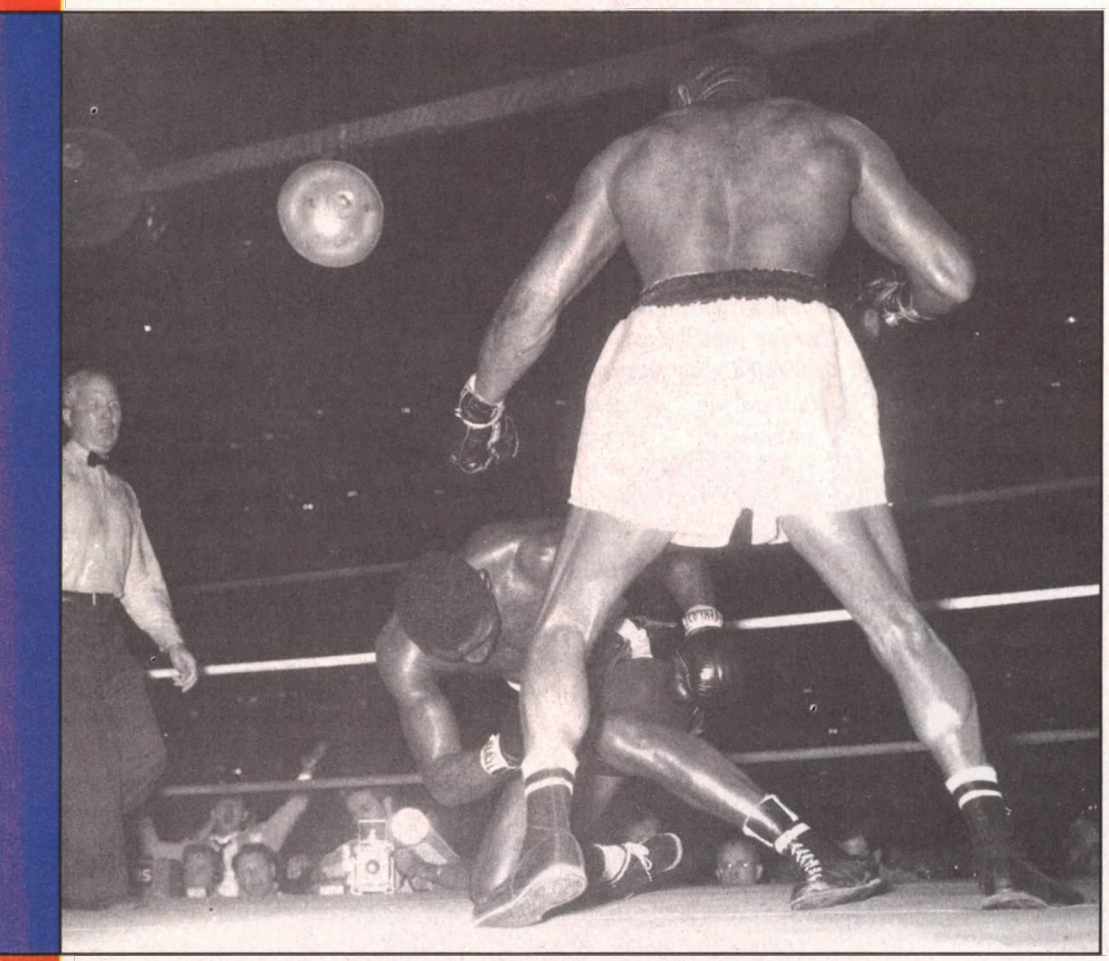
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, July 18, 1951

Charles thought himself a sure thing against this old man he'd twice outclassed. The first time they met, for the vacant heavyweight title two years earlier, he dropped Walcott and boxed rings around him, and although it was slightly closer when they did it again 21 months later, Charles won clearly. Jersey Joe, officially 37 (but perhaps older), also dropped a decision to Rex Layne right before the second fight with Charles, suggesting he was on the slide, but Charles wanted an easy filler opponent and, once again, chose Walcott.

"The Cincinnati Cobra" was on a 24-fight winning streak and had just squeezed in his eighth world title defense, a 15-rounder against Joey Maxim, seven weeks earlier. What was not yet clear was that the 30-year-old was already in decline after 78 professional bouts. In fact, he passed his best at light heavyweight back in 1948, when, having whipped a peak Archie Moore for the third time, he killed Sam Baroudi in the ring and began to hold back.

The 6-foot, 182-pound Charles still had an edge over the 6-foot, 194-pound Walcott, but the gap was closing. Charles' once-remarkable reflexes had slowed just a little, but he was still able to keep clear of Walcott's dangerous right by circling to his own right and using his advantage in speed.

Early in the seventh, Walcott landed a left uppercut to the jaw to catch the champion's attention. Charles came back with a stiff right to the body before sliding away. Walcott then walked forward, rolling both arms and gloves as if offering a choice. Charles watched the right, retreated, and threw a jab, but Walcott slipped it and at that moment pivoted his body to launch the perfect left hook counter, bringing it up from just above his hips and landing it flush on the side of the jaw. Charles later called it a "sucker punch," but it was the finest of Walcott's 23-year career—better even than the "sucker" punches that dropped Joe Louis three times and Rocky Marciano once.



Charles slumps after fielding Walcott's "sucker" punch

For a fraction of a second, Charles staggered, eyes vacant and mouth open, and then he flopped forward on his knees, brushing Walcott's legs. When Jersey Joe stepped back, Charles collapsed onto his stomach. Referee Buck McTiernan reached the count of 10 at the 55-second mark. Charles struggled to pull his body upright, but he couldn't hold his balance and collapsed on his back.

Eleven months later, they fought for a fourth time, with Walcott winning a disputed 15-round decision. Charles was never the same after that and began to lose to men he'd previously beaten, although at the age of 33 he twice came close to beating Rocky Marciano.

One Punch & It's Over!

A half-century of memorable knockouts

Rocky Marciano KO 13 Jersey Joe Walcott

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 23, 1952

At the time, Walcott was the oldest-ever world heavyweight champion at an official age of 38 years and eight months (but perhaps as old as 42). He was slightly slower than he was when unofficially beat Joe Louis five years earlier, but he was still a formidable boxer-puncher. The tenacious, heavy-handed, 29-year-old Marciano was reaching his peak after 42 fights—all wins (although he lost an amateur fight between his first and second professional outings)—but he was giving away six inches in reach, 1½ inches in height, and 12 pounds to the 6-foot, 196-pound Walcott.

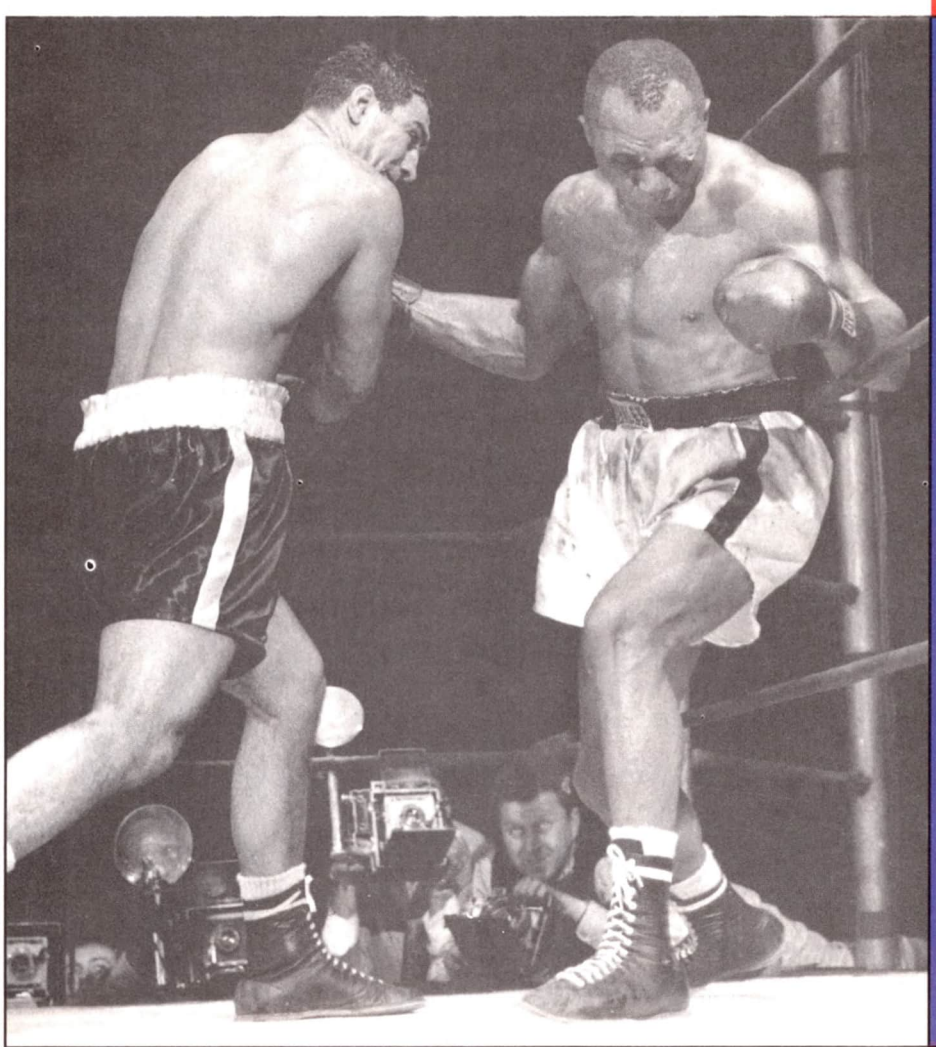
Instead of his usual style of sliding (or walking) out of the way, Walcott fought aggressively, dropping Marciano for a three-count with a beautiful left hook to the jaw within the first minute. He had the quicker hands and straighter punches, and was outlanding Marciano two-to-one, but was also absorbing heavy punishment, particularly to the body. The challenger punched after the bell, landed low, and used his head—opening a nasty gash near the old man's left eye in round six. After the halfway mark, Walcott dominated, with Marciano complaining he couldn't see properly after astringent solution dripped into his eye. The world champion cut him up and gave him a severe beating, particularly in round 11 when he hurt Marciano with a body blow.

In round 13, Walcott, ahead on all cards, decided to please the fans with a knockout, but Marciano met him with a vicious left hook to the body. Jersey Joe retreated to the ropes and prepared to punch again, but his advanced age and all the heavy punches he'd taken on the ribs, arms, and shoulders slowed him down, and for once, it was "The Brockton Blockbuster" who landed first.

He stepped in with the finest punch of his career: a right cross that traveled just 12 inches across his chest, had all his weight and strength behind it, and landed on the left side of Walcott's jaw. Its massive impact twisted Jersey Joe's head around and distorted his features. As his body slid down the ropes, Marciano grazed his hair with an afterthought of a left hook.

Walcott crumpled onto one knee before slowly tipping forward and landing on his face with his left arm looped around the rope. Referee Charlie Daggert counted him out, 43 seconds into the round. "I feel hurt losing a fight that was so one-sided," he said later. "I never felt better or more confident."

Eight months on they did it again, and Marciano knocked him out in one round. Walcott retired, while the popular Italian-American defended his title five more times before retiring undefeated.



Marciano rallies and crushes Jersey Joe with the fight-ending right

One Punch & It's Over!

A half-century of memorable knockouts

Sugar Ray Robinson KO 5 Gene Fullmer

Chicago, Illinois, May 1, 1957

This was not a fight Robinson was expected to win. Four months earlier, Fullmer knocked him out of the ring in the seventh round and dominated him to win a clear, unanimous decision. Two days short of his 36th birthday, Sugar Ray clearly no longer had the speed, reflexes, and sense of anticipation of his prime, while the 25-year-old Fullmer had reached his rampaging peak.

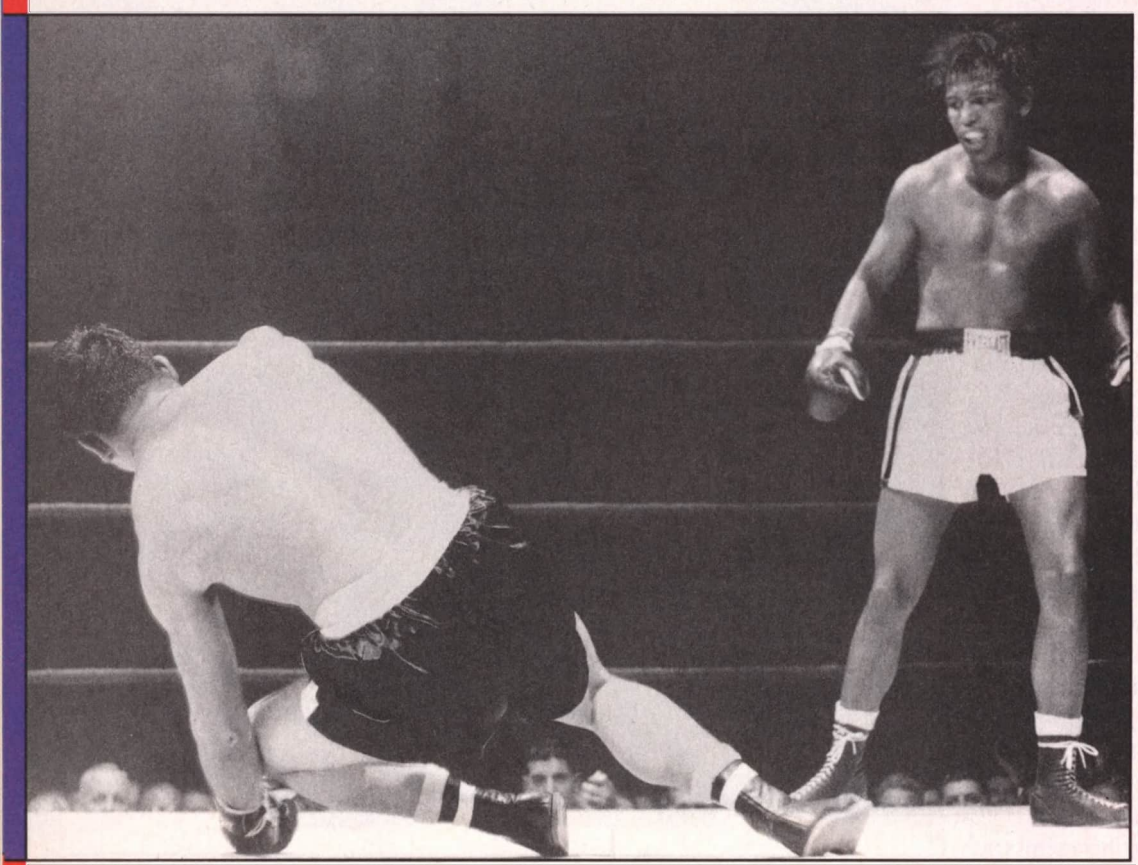
The bout followed the formbook for the first four rounds, with Fullmer's youth and greater strength giving him the edge. Robinson was struggling to hold him off as he steamed forward aggressively.

Coming out for the fifth, Robinson was still on his toes, boxing mainly in retreat and holding when Fullmer closed the gap, while the flat-footed Utah Mormon was stalking him, trying to cut off the ring and throwing meaty hooks on the inside. They came out of a clinch and Robinson landed a quick, stiff jab. Fullmer's response was to charge forward, and Sugar Ray dug in with a hard right to the ribs before dancing away, but the champion kept advancing, fighting out of a pronounced crouch, with his right slightly lowered, ready to punch again.

Robinson, still moving backward, spotted the gap and twisted his torso and left shoulder to fire a low, short, quick left hook that caught Fullmer flush on the side of his exposed chin as he was barreling forward. It was certainly one of the most perfect single punches ever thrown—extremely hard and fast and, most of all, perfectly timed and placed to catch Fullmer, who'd never been knocked out before, completely by surprise. It was one of those punches that seemed so effortless that it was only later that its brilliance was absorbed.

The champion's head twisted from the impact, and he crumpled, unconscious for a few seconds and then unable to get his body to react to his conscious commands. He tried to push himself up with his knees and hands but collapsed again, face forward, and was counted out. Sugar Ray Robinson was world middleweight champion for the fourth time.

"He hit me with this left hook I never seen, heard, or felt," Fullmer said. "As a matter of fact, when I got up, I said, 'Why is Robinson doing exercises between rounds? Look at him over there jumping up and down.' They said, 'he just won, they counted to 10.'"



Fullmer spins to the canvas following Robinson's left hook

Robinson lost his title in his first defense, against Carmen Basilio, regained it, and lost it again. Fullmer became champion for a second time 2½ years later and defended against Robinson in December 1960. Most ringsiders scored that fight for Sugar Ray, but the official verdict was a draw, and Fullmer clearly won their fourth fight in 1961.

One Punch & It's Over!

A half-century of memorable knockouts

Muhammad Ali KO 1 Sonny Liston

Lewiston, Maine, May 25, 1965

Few would describe Ali's return victory over Liston as one of the greatest-ever knockouts, but it was certainly the most controversial, and possibly the most famous, one-punch ending ever.

The fight was delayed by six months because Ali needed a hernia operation, meaning that both men were out of the ring for 15 months. The 23-year-old Ali looked bigger than when he won the title (despite being 4½ pounds lighter at 206). Liston, at 215¼ pounds (2¾ lighter than in their first bout), was listed at 33 years of age but was probably more like 36 or 37, and already had problems with alcohol.

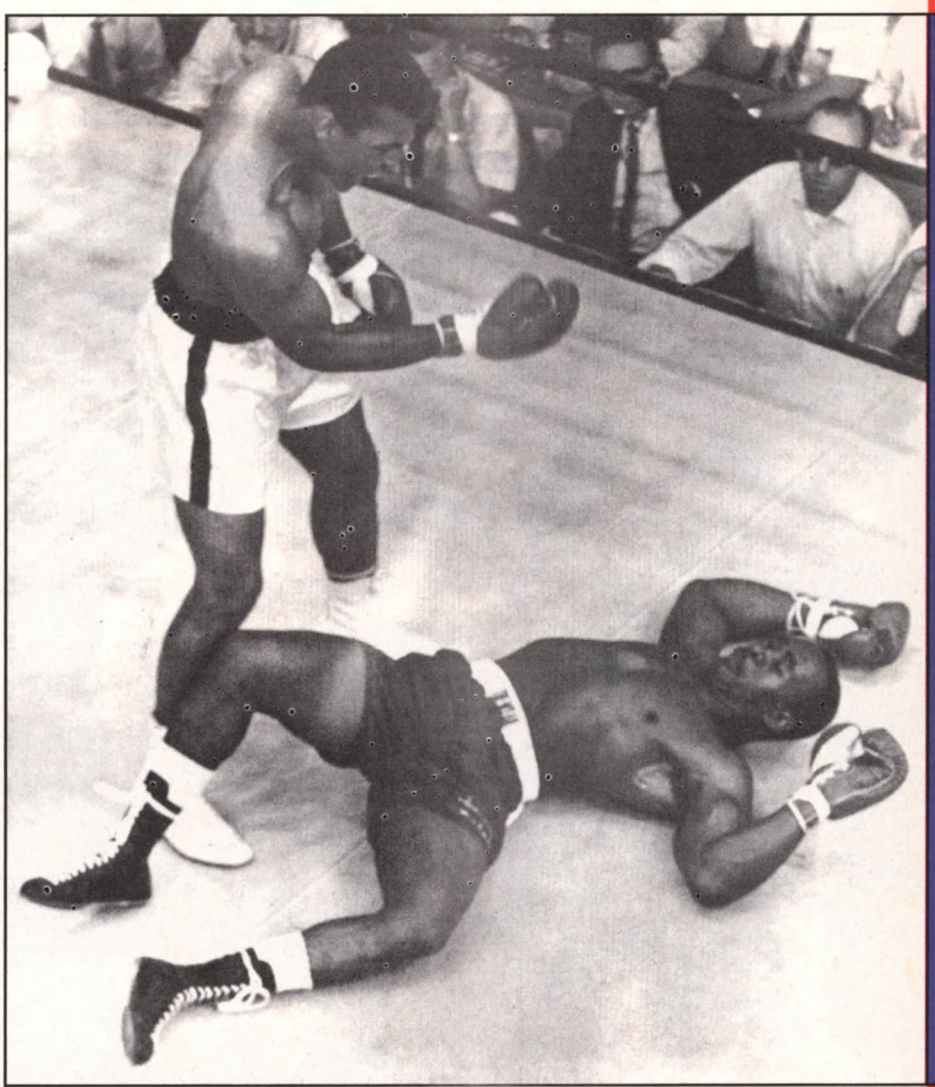
Ali danced to his right with his hands down, landing a sharp lead right to the jaw and then flicking out his jab. Liston followed, missing with two jabs and then grazing Ali with another. The champion fired a quick left-right combination to the head and then placed his glove behind the older man's head, but Liston replied with two heavy hooks to the ribs.

With his back to the ropes, Ali pivoted slightly on his right foot and threw a short, fast right hand over Liston's missed jab. It landed high on the side of the face, and Liston's left foot gave a tiny jerk and he went down on his back with Ali screaming, "Get up, you bum!" The referee, Jersey Joe Walcott, was at a loss, but eventually waved Ali to a neutral corner, although he made no move to get there. Liston half-rose and collapsed again. Finally, after 17 seconds (but not quite a 10-count), he stood up and Ali landed a wild flurry of punches.

Meanwhile, timekeeper Francis McDonough was trying to tell Walcott he'd counted Liston out, prompting the stopwatch-waving RING editor, Nat Fleischer, to yell that it was over (although he was wrong, because the count should not have started until Ali reached the neutral corner). Walcott acquiesced, and at 2:12 of the round declared Ali the winner, 30 seconds after Liston went down.

There are several theories: It was a genuine knockout (Ali's story); Liston stayed down because Ali was standing over him (Liston's story); it was a genuine knockdown but he didn't get up because he'd lost hope; Liston dived from what Jimmy Cannon called "a punch that couldn't crush a grape" because (take your pick) the Nation of Islam/the Mob threatened/bribed him, he had a percentage in Ali's future ring earnings, or he got someone to bet on a first-round loss.

Nearly a decade later, Ali won the title for a second time with another knockout over another rock-jawed champion, George Foreman. Liston won 15 of his last 16 before dying under suspicious circumstances of a heroin overdose in 1970.



Ali screams at Liston to get up

One Punch & It's Over!

A half-century of memorable knockouts

Bob Foster KO 4 Dick Tiger

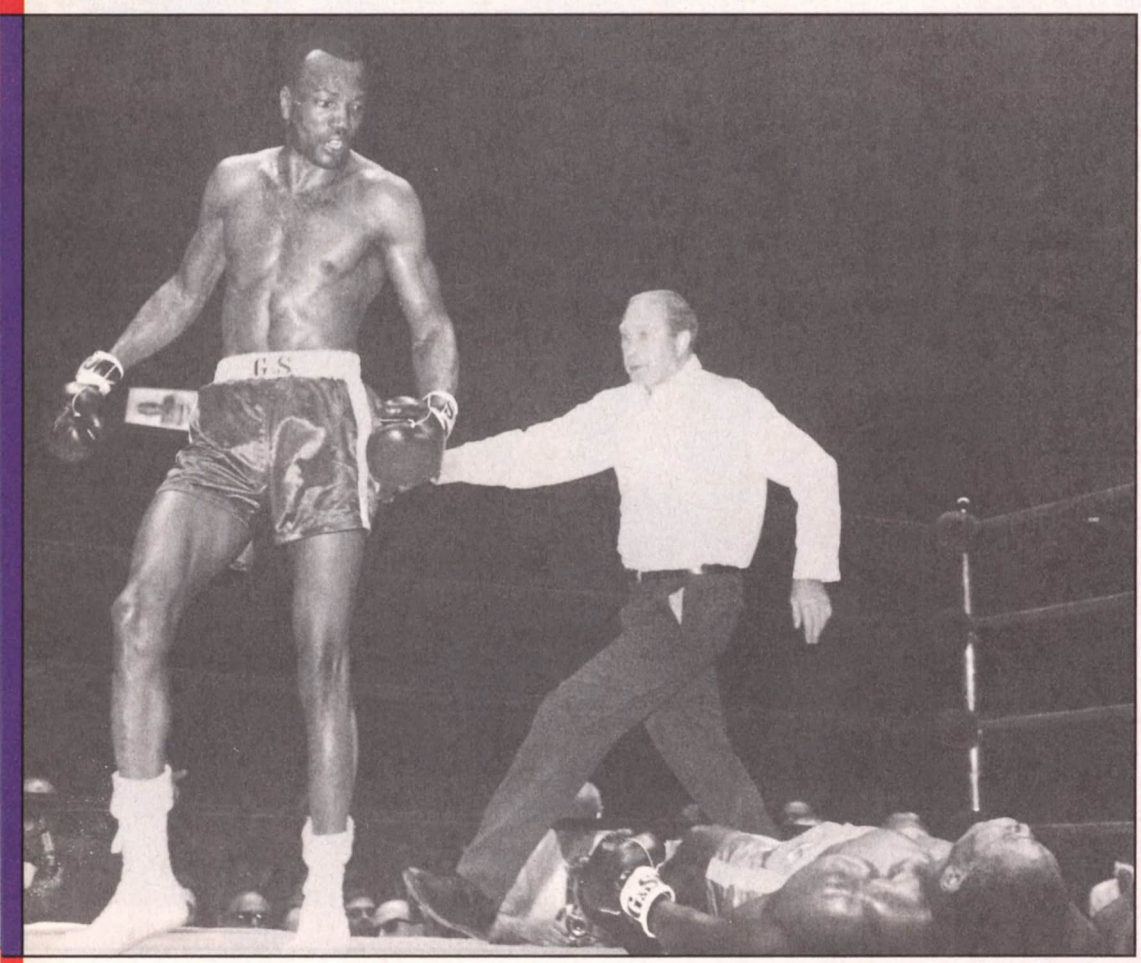
New York, New York, May 24, 1968

Tiger was one of those fighters loved by the crowds and hated by the bookies. Look at the men he beat: Gene Fullmer (twice), Joey Giardello (twice), Jose Torres (twice), Rubin Carter, Nino Benvenuti. But he was unreliable, with a record showing 15 losses out of 76 bouts coming into his light heavyweight title defense against Foster. Soon after losing the middleweight title to the quick welterweight champion Emile Griffith, he beat the slick Jose Torres for the light heavy title. And here he was at Madison Square Garden, three months short of his 39th birthday, after 18 months as champion—a good run by his standards.

The 29-year-old challenger was extremely reliable, as long as he was fighting men his own weight. By 1968, he had four losses out of 33 fights, all against heavyweights. The 6'3" Foster seemed more fragile than the 5'8" Tiger. But Foster, with 23 knockouts in 29 wins, could take you out with one punch, while Tiger, with 26 knockouts in 58 wins, relied on the accumulation of punches. So it was Foster's jab and hook against Tiger's durability and in-fighting skill.

The Nigerian made a positive start, landing a hard left hook early in the first round and then boring in to work the body, and it was clear the American did not like fighting in retreat. But from the second round Foster, the 12-5 favorite, began to make use of his eight-inch reach advantage to keep the fight at long range, snaking out his long jab while evading Tiger's hooks.

Late in round four, Foster missed with a right and then, as Tiger came forward, fired a short left hook that crashed into the jaw, catching him unaware. Tiger fell hard and was counted out at the 2:05 mark. As Foster recalled: "I bent *way* down low and missed with the first shot; then he came in again and, *Wham! Bam!* I caught him on the chin and he fell backward and hit headfirst. That's how hard I hit him. He tried his damnedest to get up, but there was no way in the world he'd have made it. He was out of it. S___, I must have jumped higher than a house."



Tiger is unconscious after taking a vicious hook from Foster

Recalling the experience of his first and only knockout loss in his 18-year career, Tiger said: "I do not see anything. I do not hear anything. Everything is all quiet, and it is dark. There is no pain, there is no sound. I do not know I was on the floor."

Tiger won his next three fights, but retired, aged 41, after a second loss to Griffith and died of cancer a few months later. Foster reigned for six years, making 14 defenses.

One Punch & It's Over!

A half-century of memorable knockouts

Mike Weaver KO 15 John Tate

Knoxville, Tennessee, March 31, 1980

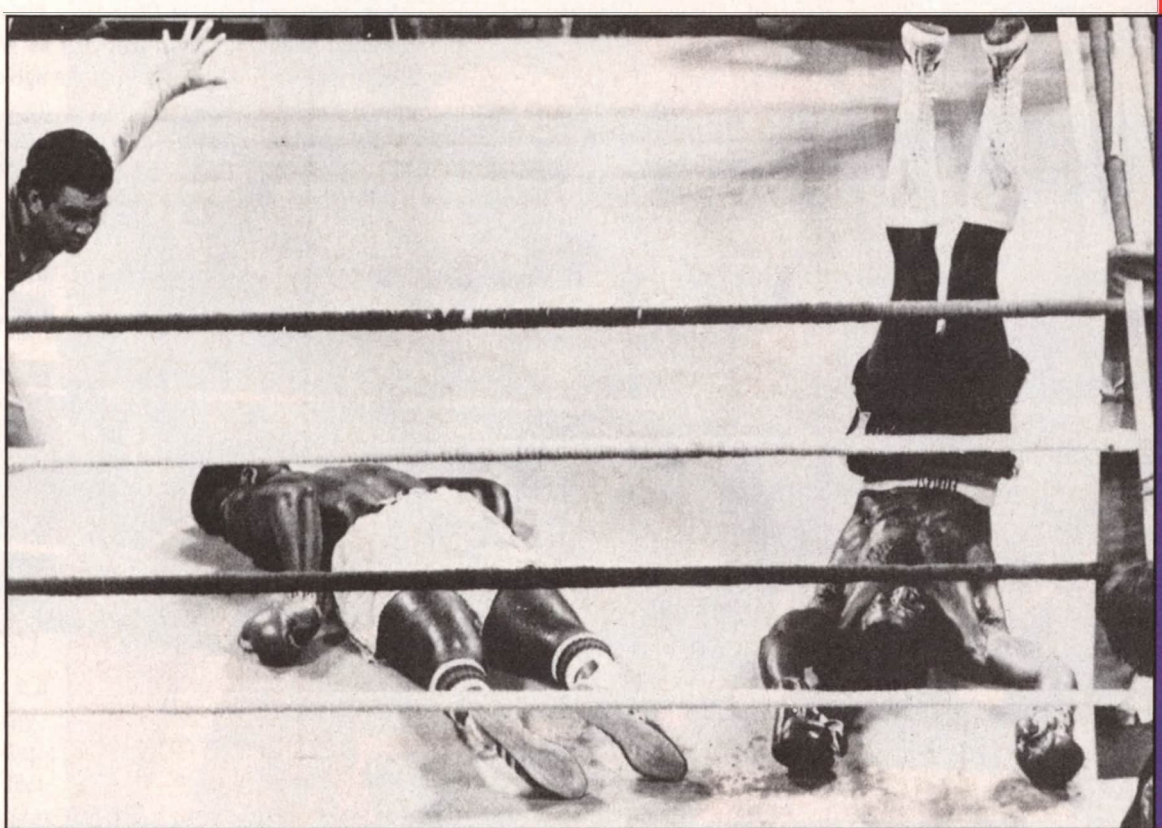
Big John Tate had been on a tear since being flattened by Cuba's Teofilo Stevenson in the 1976 Olympics: 20 fights, 20 wins, 15 knockouts in less than three professional years. He traveled to South Africa to bash up Kallie Knoetze in a final eliminator and then did it again before 86,000 South Africans, outpointing Gerrie Coetzee to win the vacant WBA heavyweight title. Fighting at home, he figured to have an easy first defense against Weaver, whose 21-9 (14) record suggested his limitations, even if he put up one helluva fight against the real world champion, Larry Holmes, nine months earlier.

The 25-year-old, 6'4", 232-pound Tate had it all his own way in the early rounds, using his size, strength, and hard jab to push around the 27-year-old, 6'1", 207½-pound Weaver, leaning on him up close and catching him with his straight but not particularly snappy right cross. Weaver cut him in the fourth, but most of the rounds were dominated by the defending titlist, to the delight of the 13,769-strong hometown crowd. Weaver finally landed a powerful left hook on Tate's fragile chin in round 12, and the big man flopped into the ropes and held on desperately until the bell. His crisis averted, he continued plodding to victory over the next two rounds. Going into the final round, Tate was leading 138-133, 137-134, and 136-133.

Weaver came out aggressively, landing a right cross and then two hurtful hooks, followed by another hard right. But Tate was still fighting back and holding when it got too rough. With a minute to go, Weaver struck again—a hard left hook to the body and a right cross to the head—and then gave a hard shove. Tate bounced off the ropes, and Weaver landed a hard right to the body. Tate was now open and wounded, and "Hercules" unleashed a massive left hook on his unguarded chin.

As Tate collapsed forward, Weaver fired a right to the side of the head, and then missed with a left hook. But it was really one punch, the hook that landed, which did all the damage. The titleholder landed on his face and didn't move as referee Ernesto Magana counted him out, with 45 seconds remaining in round 15.

Tate, who was assured a big payday against a comebacking Muhammad Ali had he won, never got over it. He was stopped in his next fight and then picked up some meaningless wins. He put on weight, lost again, and became a drug addict and glutton. He suffered a stroke while driving, crashed his car, and died at the age of 43. Weaver made a couple of defenses before losing his WBA title on a premature first-round stoppage to Michael Dokes.



While Tate is counted out, Weaver flips out

One Punch & It's Over!

A half-century of memorable knockouts

Mike McCallum KO 5 Donald Curry

Las Vegas, Nevada, July 18, 1987

Curry was regarded by many as the best boxer in the world until losing his welterweight title 10 months earlier. He'd been compared with the greats of the past and there was speculation that he could move up to beat Marvin Hagler. His shocking sixth-round stoppage against Lloyd Honeyghan was initially viewed as an aberration caused by a combination of drastic weight-making and cuts. After picking up a couple of junior middleweight wins (albeit on disqualifications), he was installed as the betting favorite despite the fact that the 30-year-old, 31-0 (28) champion had reigned for three impressive years, knocking out top men like Milton McCrory and Julian Jackson.

For four rounds, the 25-year-old, 27-1 (19) "Cobra" enjoyed a slight edge because of his advantages in speed of hand and foot. He would throw quick combinations and then move out of the way, but he was also effective on the inside because he was such a tight technical fighter. In the second round, he shook the Jamaican, and he continued to thrive in rounds three and four.

"Curry was a good thinker and he punched quick and very precise," McCallum recalled. "It was like a chess match, a real thinking man's fight, and he had me going until I knocked him out."

Curry, however, had several weaknesses that had not yet been fully exposed. He had nowhere near McCallum's strength, power, or durability, and he made mistakes like backing off with his hands down. "The Bodysnatcher" kept on pressing, working Curry's ribs whenever he got close and looking for the big opening, and he eventually found a gap in round five.

With one quick, deft swivel of the shoulders, McCallum detonated a perfectly placed left hook to the side of the chin and Curry was out cold before he hit the canvas, where he was counted out by referee Richard Steele. "That left hook came out of the blue and it had so much power on it," said Steele. "I couldn't believe it. No one could see it coming, and it was devastating—one of the most vicious punches I'd ever seen. I could have counted to 20 and it would have made no difference."

Although Curry won his next four fights and enjoyed a brief stint as WBC 154-pound titlist, he was never quite the same again and ended up losing four of his final seven fights. McCallum went on to reign for nearly three years as WBA middleweight beltholder and for a year as WBC light heavyweight king before finally retiring at the age of 40.

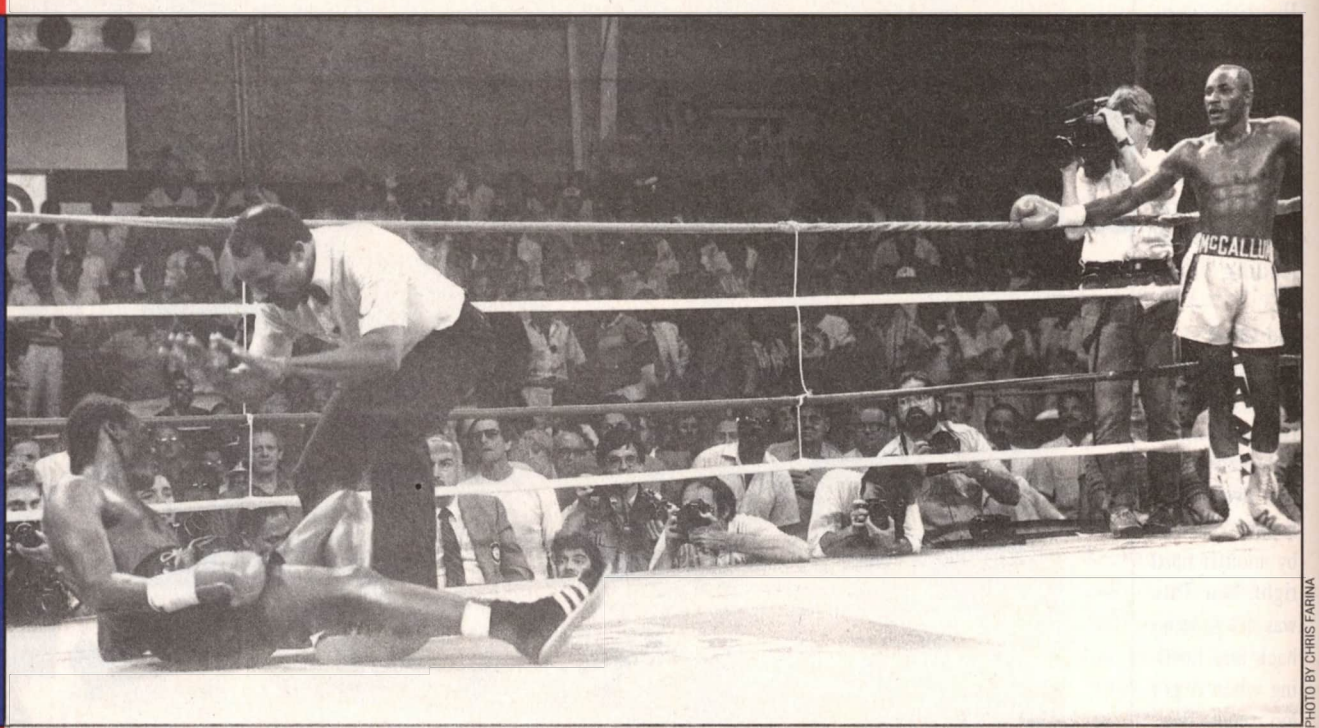


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Steele counts out Curry as McCallum looks on

One Punch & It's Over!

A half-century of memorable knockouts

George Foreman KO 10 Michael Moorer

Las Vegas, Nevada, November 5, 1994

When Foreman began his comeback 10 years after being beaten by feather-fisted Jimmy Young, it was considered a bad joke. What made it bearable was that this formerly mono-syllabic monster had become such a gregarious fatty. And yet behind all the lard, the hard man lurked, building his strength and perfecting a more relaxed style. Still, in his first try for the title, in 1991, Evander Holyfield soundly outpointed him. In 1992, he was grotesquely battered and bruised in a majority decision win against Alex Stewart, and in 1993, he was outboxed by Tommy Morrison.

This made him the ideal choice for the 26-year-old linear (and WBA and IBF) heavyweight champion. In his previous fight, Moorer was fortunate to catch Holyfield on one of his off-nights, and scraped the decision, but he wasn't about to tangle with someone as big, talented, and young as Lennox Lewis. Slow, ancient George seemed made to match. He'd been out of the ring for 17 months, and was two months shy of his 46th birthday.

The 6'3½", 250-pound Foreman (his lightest weight of the final nine years of his career) was in fine shape, but for nine rounds, Moorer's choice of opponents was vindicated. The 6'2", 222-pound southpaw pecked away and moved out of danger. Two judges made it 88-83 Moorer, while the third (Duane Ford) managed a ridiculous 86-85. All of these scores were generous to Big George. The bout was so one-sided that referee Joe Cortez later admitted he was considering stopping it if Foreman didn't rally.

But Moorer stopped moving his feet, and Foreman hit him with a one-two combination, which should have prompted a flight reaction, but instead Moorer chose to fight, so the old man did it again, and this time the long right cross landed flush on that porcelain chin. The punch wasn't quick, nor particularly heavy by Foreman's standards (he was no longer punching his weight and Moorer turned out to be his only stoppage victim in his final six fights). But it caught the tiring champion squarely on the side of his chin when he wasn't expecting it, and to the astonishment of the crowd of 19,000, his lights went out for the full count. As Angelo Dundee put it: "The shot Michael got hit with, he didn't expect to get hit with."

Foreman was stripped of his alphabet titles because of his refusal to face anyone worthy and finally lost linear recognition to Shannon Briggs in '97. Moorer's chin continued to let him down and, although he regained the IBF title, he could never quite get over the Foreman setback (a bit like George with Ali, in fact): "If I had ducked one more time, we'd be selling Michael Moorer grills instead of George Foreman grills," he said years later.

PHOTO BY ANTHONY NESTE/HBO

Foreman's shock right hand finishes Moorer

One Punch & It's Over!

A half-century of memorable knockouts

Roy Jones KO 4 Virgil Hill

Biloxi, Mississippi, April 25, 1998

Hill was one of the more underrated light heavyweight titlists: two reigns as WBA king, a total of 22 title victories, and he unified by beating IBF beltholder Henry Maske in Germany. In 45 fights prior to meeting Jones, his only defeats came on points against Tommy Hearns and Dariusz Michalczewski (his previous fight, nine months earlier). This naturally left-handed, orthodox-style master jabber was past his best, but he still had enough left for several more good wins. The 29-year-old Jones had gradually come up from junior middleweight, with only three fights at light heavy, and this one was made at 177 pounds (the 34-year-old Hill couldn't make 175 anymore).

Hill relied on his jab, moving quickly around the ring, and it was not until the final minute of round one that Jones landed squarely—first a left hook to the head, and a bit later a leaping left to the ear, and finally a right cross in the closing seconds. He connected with several rights in the second, doing his best to counter the elusive Hill and to work his body, but just before the bell, Hill drove him into the ropes with a hard jab and a quick hook. By the second half of the third round, Jones had settled and was starting to time his counters better, landing stiff rights and shaking Hill with a particularly sharp one-two, but at the end of the round, the older man caught him with a hard left to the head. Jones won all three rounds, but Hill was still in the fight, opening the fourth with several hard jabs.

Jones saw his opening at the one-minute mark, firing a short, brutal right to the ribs that resounded around the arena with a loud crack.

"I had been off for a little bit and I knew I would be rusty," Jones said later. "I knew it would take some time to get going. And you saw what happened when I did."

Hill crumpled, holding his rib cage, before collapsing on his right side and rolling over from the pain of the punch. When referee Fred Steinwinder's count reached five, he buried his head in the canvas, pushed himself to his knees, and rose at nine. Still doubled over in agony, Hill flopped into the referee's arms at the count of 10, at the 1:10 mark. Hill complained of severe pain above his left kidney and went to the hospital with a cracked rib. It was perhaps the most sensational single-body-punch knockout of the 20th century.

Two years later, Hill won the WBA cruiserweight title, while Jones reigned for six more years as world light heavyweight champion, before being the victim of a one-punch knockout against Antonio Tarver.

PHOTO BY KEN REGAN/HBO

Jones saws Hill in half with a right

One Punch & It's Over!

A half-century of memorable knockouts

Hasim Rahman KO 5 Lennox Lewis

Johannesburg, South Africa, April 22, 2001

Lewis decided to defend his title in South Africa because of a personal invitation from Nelson Mandela. Having declared himself a "pugilist specialist," he couldn't imagine being troubled by this mediocre American. As his physiologist, Joe Dunbar, put it, "The first Rahman fight was one of Lennox's lighter workloads." His preparations were interrupted by his appearance in the movie *Ocean's Eleven,* and when he finally arrived 11 days before the fight, he found the 6,000-foot altitude left him breathless. The superbly conditioned, 238-pound, 28-year-old Rahman arrived two weeks earlier and had acclimatized fully.

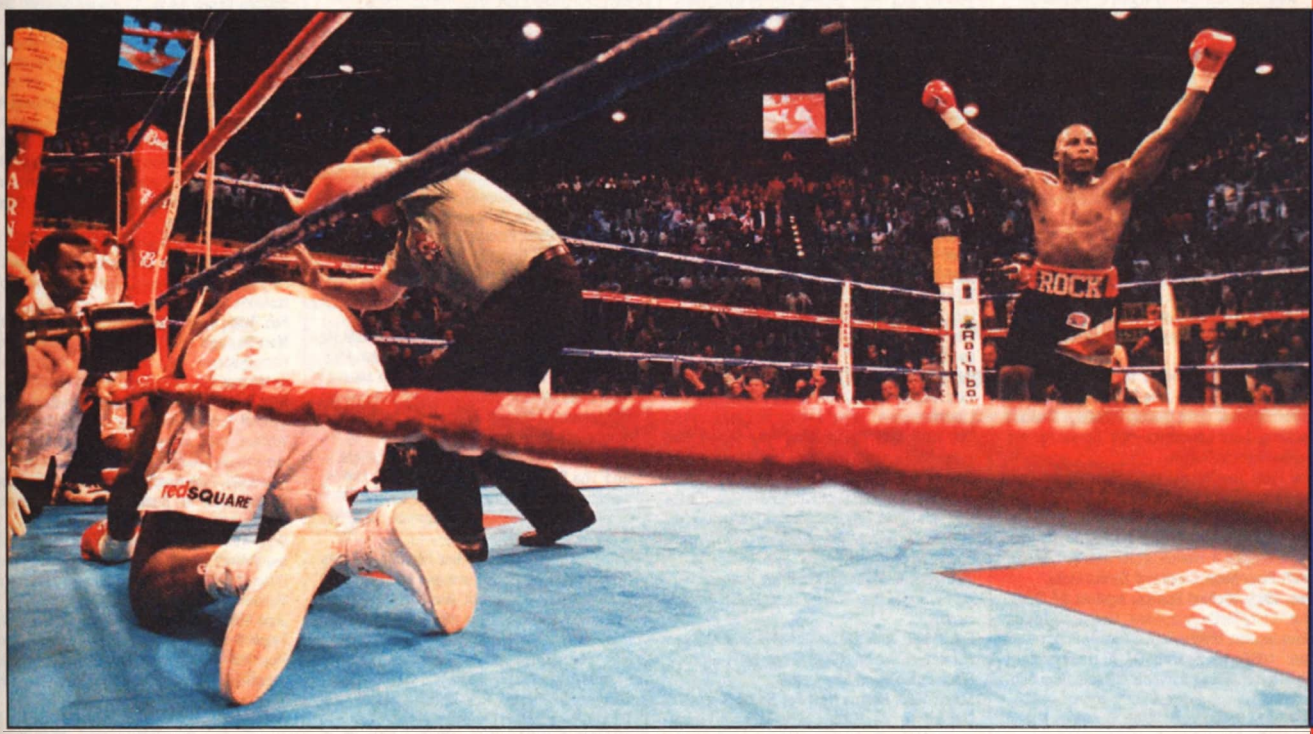
Lewis, 35, at a career-high 253 pounds, was out of breath by the end of the second round, his timing was off, his footwork was leaden, and he was neglecting his jab—but he won three out of four rounds on all three cards. Rahman landed a hard right midway through round five, but he was nevertheless in trouble—wiping his cut eye, turning away, and looking thoroughly discouraged, as his corner yelled at him to get off the ropes and throw some punches.

A grinning Lewis retreated to the ropes after avoiding a series of jabs and stood at an angle, with his arms apart and gloves low. Rahman cocked his right, and Lewis tried to bounce off the ropes, but crossed his legs awkwardly. Rahman took a step forward and put his full body weight behind the hardest, heaviest, straightest right hand he would ever throw. It landed flush with a cracking sound on the side of the jaw—"one of the greatest punches I've ever seen," said Lewis' trainer, Emanuel Steward. To which Lewis later added: "The punch was a great punch, but I never put my left hand in position to block it. My defense wasn't like it should have been. I may have taken him a bit lightly."

Lewis' head banged down hard, but when the referee, Daniel Van de Wiele, reached the count of four, he rolled over and used his hands and knees to push himself up. Still, his left leg wobbled and his body drooped when the count reached 10 at the 2:32 mark.

"He was trying to count me out as fast as possible, and when I was getting up, he stopped the fight," Lewis complained. To which Steward added: "When Lennox went down, the referee started counting like he was in a race." In fact, it was only fractionally fast: 9.9 seconds passed between the moment Lennox hit the canvas and the moment when the count reached 10.

Seven months later, they fought again, and Lewis threw a diversionary left hook before knocking Rahman cold with perhaps the best right cross in heavyweight history. It, too, was an all-time great one-punch knockout, but it wasn't quite as historic as the shocker in South Africa. ■



Rahman celebrates his one-punch upset for the title

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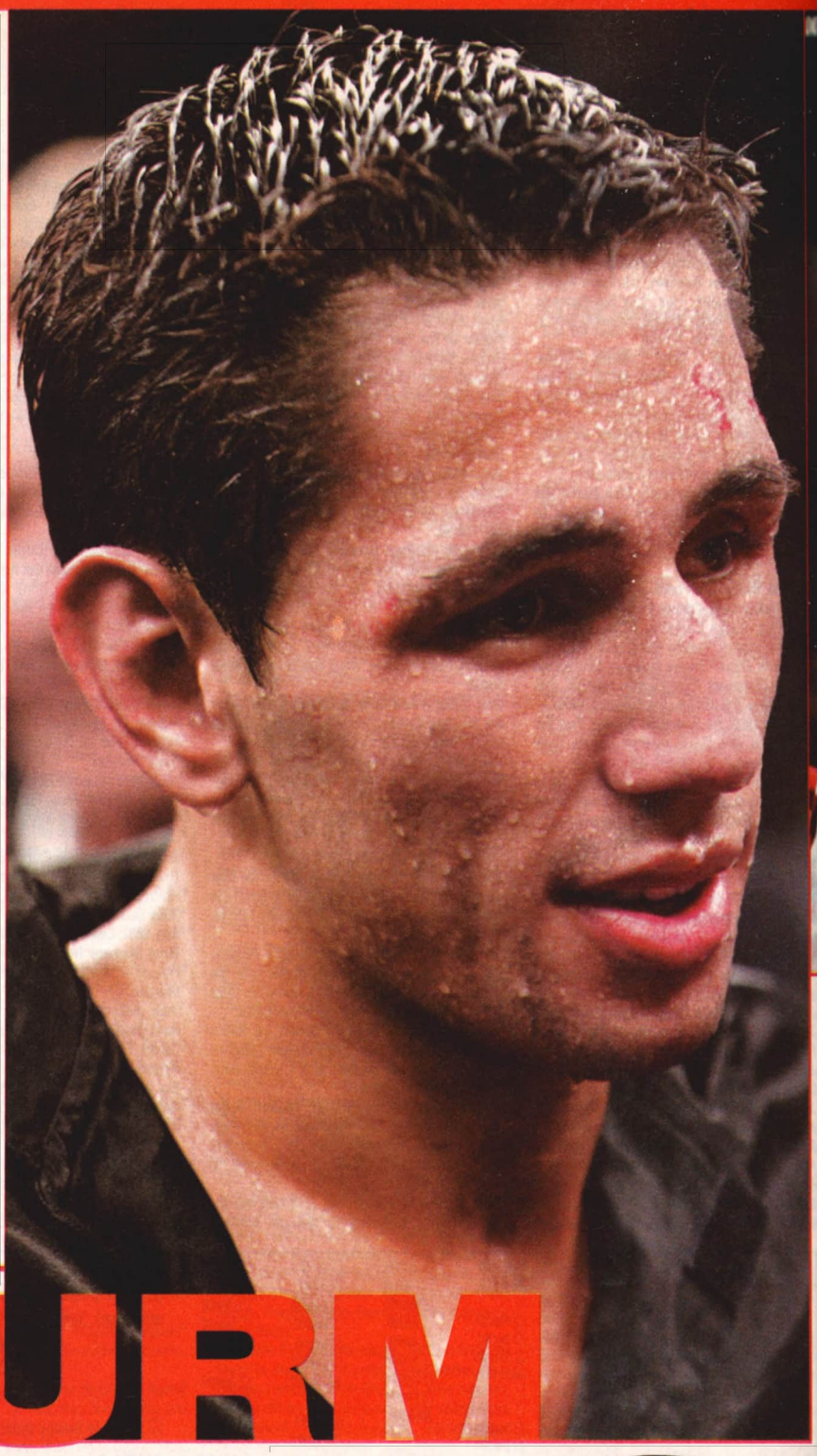
By Brian Doogan

PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

By the time Felix Sturm returned from Las Vegas in the second week of June to his parents' home in Leverkusen, an industrial town on the banks of the Rhine near to Cologne in the west of Germany, his name and reputation had been transformed. The one-time Adnan Catic, the only son in a Bosnian family who changed his name because he loved the cartoon cat, was suddenly as luminous in the world of boxing as the lights of the gambling citadel in which he faced the sport's greatest superstar.

It was Oscar De La Hoya who prevailed in the eyes of three judges. But in the eyes of many others, he had lost to the new kid in town, the 25-year-old Sturm, whose own eyes, as he sat in the living room watching a tape of the fight alongside his father and mother, betrayed conflicting emotions.

You could see his pride as he looked at the opening few rounds and acquainted De La Hoya with a rapier-like jab that bloodied the nose of "The Golden Boy," broke his rhythm and his heart (by the final bell De La Hoya looked almost joyless), and almost ruined De La Hoya and Bernard



The Oscar De La Hoya-Bernard Hopkins superfight was almost derailed by the previously obscure Sturm (right), who fought surprisingly well against "The Golden Boy" (opposite page). So well, in fact, a lot of people, including Sturm, think that the decision should have gone to the German.

STURM WARNING!

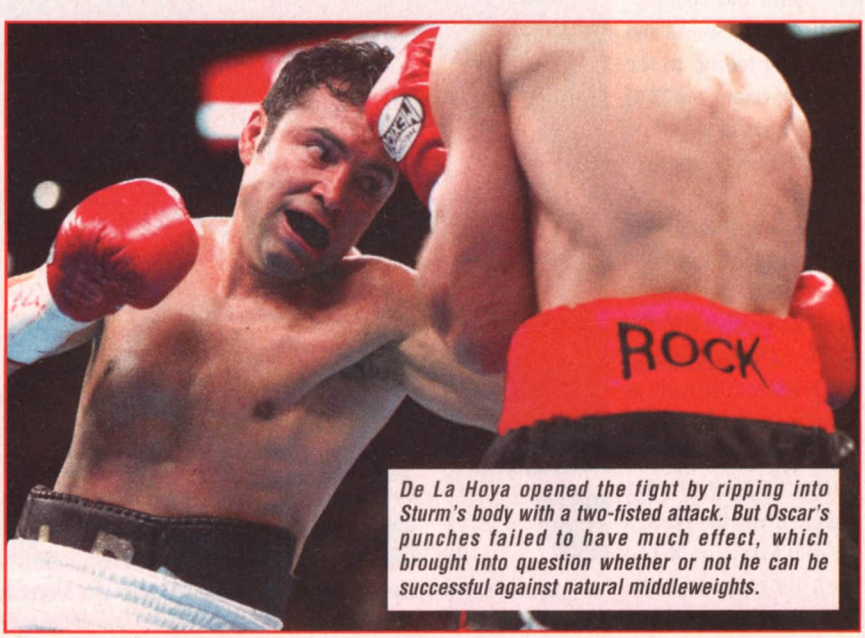
Felix Proves To Be A Force With Near-Miss Against Oscar

Hopkins' scheduled September superfight.

Still, you could see his disappointment, too, echoing his postfight insistence that De La Hoya "got the win because he's the big name." The feeling still lurked that he was robbed of his entitlement. But as his mother moved quietly into the kitchen to cook dinner—the woman he has been sufficiently inspired by to wear on his shorts in each of his 21 fights a small patch saying, "All 4 Mum"—he smiled, and for an instant seemed completely at peace.

"Yes, of course, I'm disappointed that I did not get the decision, because I feel that I deserved it. I won the fight," he said. "I felt that I controlled the fight the whole way. Not once did he hurt me. When the final bell rang, you could see which fighter thought he had won. But I know, even though the decision did not go for me, that I have arrived on the big stage. With my performance in this fight against De La Hoya, I have announced myself on the scene. If people in America had not heard of me before, they have now. I have the respect of so many people I have spoken to since the fight. They know the name now, Felix Sturm."

He was only meant to be a steppingstone, a footnote in De La Hoya's story. The name of not one opponent in his anonymous career prior to June 5 stood out. In fact, the man who may have stolen the show at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in front of a crowd of 13,041 and millions more around



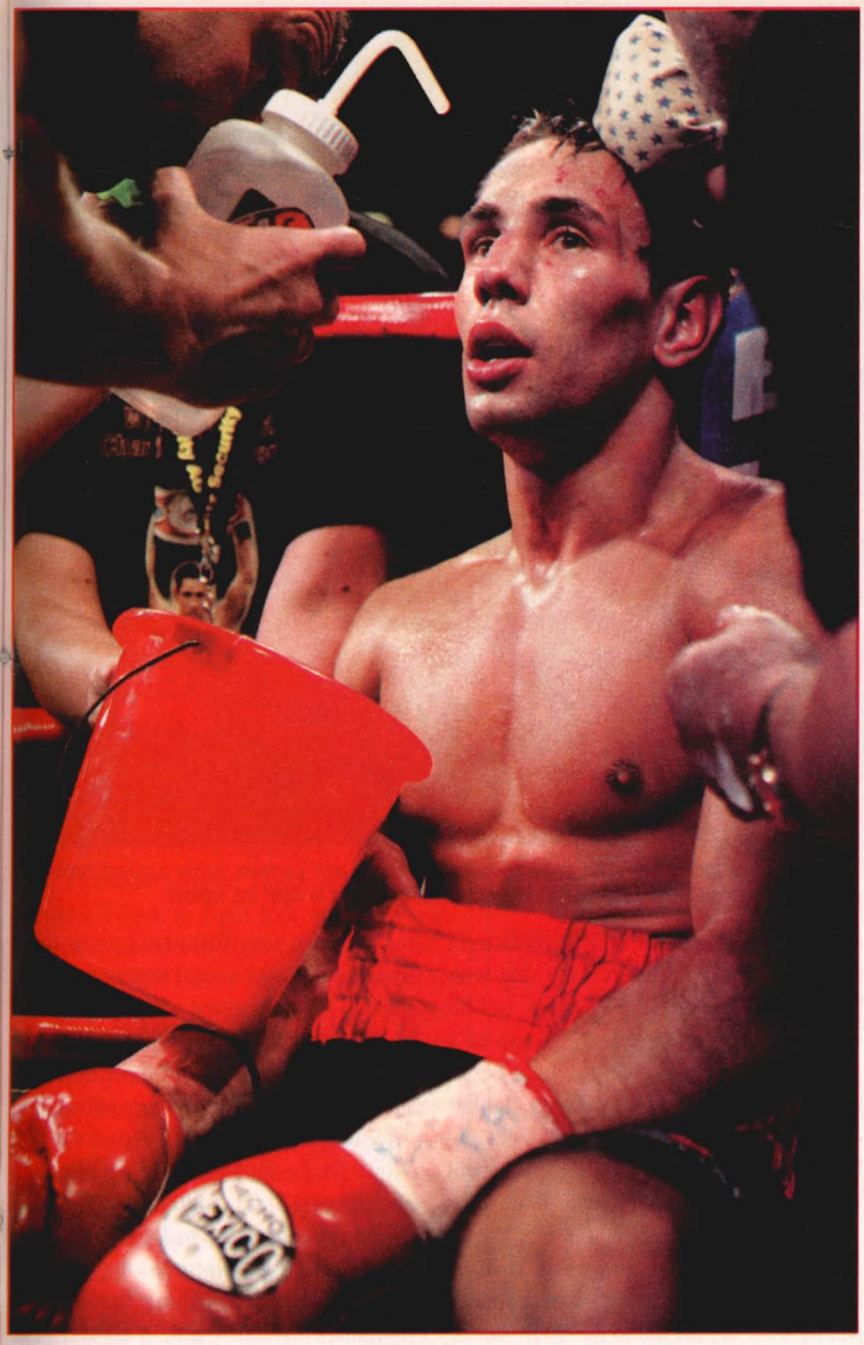
De La Hoya opened the fight by ripping into Sturm's body with a two-fisted attack. But Oscar's punches failed to have much effect, which brought into question whether or not he can be successful against natural middleweights.

Although the left jab was Sturm's chief weapon, he also raked De La Hoya with some crackling right hands. Sturm is not known as big puncher, but he certainly had more than enough power to bother the man who was favored to walk all over him.

the world, had never before boxed in a main event. The Klitschko brothers, European heavyweight champion Luan Krasniqi, heck, even Regina Halmich, a woman, had received star billing in the past while Sturm toiled away on their undercards. Yet, Sturm was cool personified in the weeks and hours that led up to the most important night of his life. Even at the sound of the bell he remained unfazed.

"I know that it was not meant to be this way. I was not supposed to make things too difficult for De La Hoya and certainly not as difficult as it became," reflected Sturm, who was 10-to-1 and more when bookmakers made the odds, a real-life Rocky as he had been portrayed in the German media. "But I knew that I had a chance to win this fight. I always believed this, even when most people had written me off completely. I remember when my trainer, Michael Timm, sat down with me to tell me that I would fight Oscar De La Hoya, the fighter I've always regarded as my hero. He was worried that I would be nervous. But I was

Despite an unexpectedly tough time, De La Hoya dug in and fought back hard enough to make it a very close fight. But even when he opened up with both hands, Oscar failed to seriously hurt Sturm at any point during the bout.



Sturm impressed everybody with his calm demeanor. The fact that he was participating in his first major fight didn't fluster him one little bit, even though the man he was fighting was one of his boxing heroes.

calm and I looked him in the eye and said without hesitation, 'I want to fight him.'

"I was certain that I would not be overawed. The experience, of course, was something entirely new, the bright lights of Vegas, all the build-up, the involvement of a star like Oscar, it was all new. But in my mind I was prepared for it. And when it became reality, I actually enjoyed it. I never felt, *I don't think I should be here*. I was comfortable. This is what I train for. This is why I make the sacrifice, to be part of something like this. I really did not feel this is not my place. I just felt relaxed, in the press conferences, at the weigh-in, in the dressing room before the fight, and then in the ring. I knew I could surprise Oscar and confuse him. I was more prepared for him than maybe he was for me."

Early into their fight, this was clear. Throughout De La Hoya's elevation to boxing's top box office draw, Sturm watched him overcome Julio Cesar Chavez, Pernell Whitaker, Ike Quartey, and Fernando Vargas. He wanted to be just like him. He dreamed of emulating De La Hoya's

Sturm scrunches De La Hoya's face with a right uppercut in the late going. The German feels that Oscar will perform better against Hopkins in September. But regardless of who prevails in that fight for the undisputed middleweight championship, he wants to fight the winner.

Olympic success, but was beaten in the Sydney Games by Jermain Taylor. But the fact that he had scrutinized De La Hoya so intensely meant that, psychologically, he was able to confront him with ease when the moment arrived. He was able to assert himself with that jab and to land short combination punches that had more than De La Hoya sweating as they accumulated. And what shone like a diamond in his display was his composure. Nothing De La Hoya did or tried to do fazed him.

When De La Hoya attacked his body, Sturm's long arms limited the damage. When the pride of East L.A. elected to stand and trade, Sturm traded with him. His punching on the inside was hard and accurate. His jab dictated the tactical war on the outside. De La Hoya, whose own jab is usually far from negligible, just could not find a way to match Sturm's or get around it. From the opening few rounds, it was evident that the fight on view was not the one people thought they would see.

"The jab was the key, without a doubt," Sturm revealed. "I controlled the fight with it. The damage to Oscar's nose was done with a jab. I think he definitely underestimated my boxing skills. Maybe he thought the opponents I had been in the ring with before were just not in his class and he would take me to another level. I know he's said that people know he can fight better than he did, that I'm an ordinary fighter. The truth is, I did not allow him to fight any better. I turned it into a fight I knew I could win. And I felt very comfortable doing it.

"Something I felt also was that De La Hoya did not have the power at middleweight. He got through with punches and he tried to hurt me to the body, but he never had me in any trouble, not once. And I think I surprised him with my hand speed. He wasn't prepared for that. I don't think there are any middleweights I could not produce this kind of performance against, including Bernard Hopkins. I watched his fight with Robert Allen and could see he has a lot of power. But I think Oscar is smarter, not as big a puncher, but a more intelligent fighter."

De La Hoya was a very frustrated fighter by the middle rounds. Sturm clearly was not about to crumble. Methodically, he stuck to his productive game plan. What might have paid even more dividends for the German was following up at times when he did land a solid uppercut or hook. Mostly, he was content when he caught De La Hoya with one or two sharp blows. Had he doubled up on some of those hooks, his success might have been more telling.

Sturm's stamina also stood the test. While De La Hoya showed definite signs of tiredness, Sturm continued to work into the late rounds as he had from the beginning of the fight. Not even the burden of approaching the finishing line with the fight in the balance—and, in his own mind, he was sure he was winning—could deter the German.

"I really thought as the bell rang to end the fight that I had beaten De La Hoya, that it would be me going on to fight Bernard Hopkins," he declared. "I really believed it was me. That's why I raised my arms."

But a trio of American judges, Dave Moretti, Paul Smith, and Mike Glienna, all scored it 115-113 for De La Hoya. This correspondent's card favored Sturm, 115-114. It was indeed close, but the vivid impression was that Sturm had gone out, tried to win, and succeeded, whereas De

La Hoya had failed to achieve what he wanted to. Perhaps the one single failing in Sturm's effort was in the power department. He has stopped only nine opponents, and Hopkins, for one, seems to be a significantly more powerful puncher.

"People have said this, I should have tried to knock him down or knock him out," Sturm acknowledged. "Look, I did enough to win. I fought the kind of fight that would give me a win over De La Hoya. In my heart, I believe I did win. I really do. There was a big fight already planned for September. What could I do? But I am right there now. I have proved myself in a big fight, and I want to continue to show that I'm in that class."

HBO was in talks with Sturm's promoter, Peter Kohl, shortly after the fight about putting Sturm in the chief support to Hopkins-De La Hoya. America is where Sturm wants to be now as often as he can after this positive experience. He certainly looked a more capable commodity than Robert Allen did against Hopkins. In fact, the new kid may be the king-in-waiting.

"I fought Jermain Taylor as an amateur and I'd love to fight him now as a pro. That's the kind of fight I'd like to be in," Sturm said. "I saw what Hopkins did to William Joppy, and he would not do that against me. I am more skilled than Joppy. I really think it will be a different fight when De La Hoya meets Hopkins. It won't just be about Hopkins' strength and power, which is what most people are saying now after June 5. I think that Oscar will prepare himself to avoid the punches Hopkins will throw and I think he will win.

"What I want is to fight the winner. I believe I've proved that I deserve this. My first experience of a big fight in the United States was fantastic, everything apart from the result. So I would love to experience all that again, and I will be even better prepared for it the next time. Yes, I want to fight still in front of my fans here in Germany. But I want also to fight in big bouts like the one I've just been in."

Sturm looks like he belongs. June 5 was supposedly all about the setting up of Hopkins-De La Hoya. What transpired instead was the arrival of Felix Sturm. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING's European correspondent.

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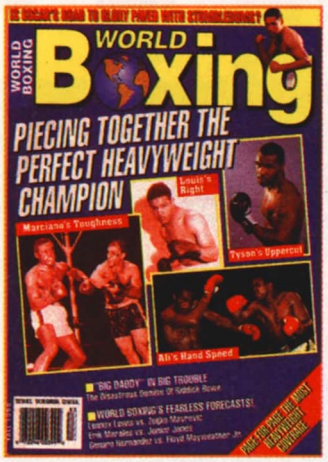

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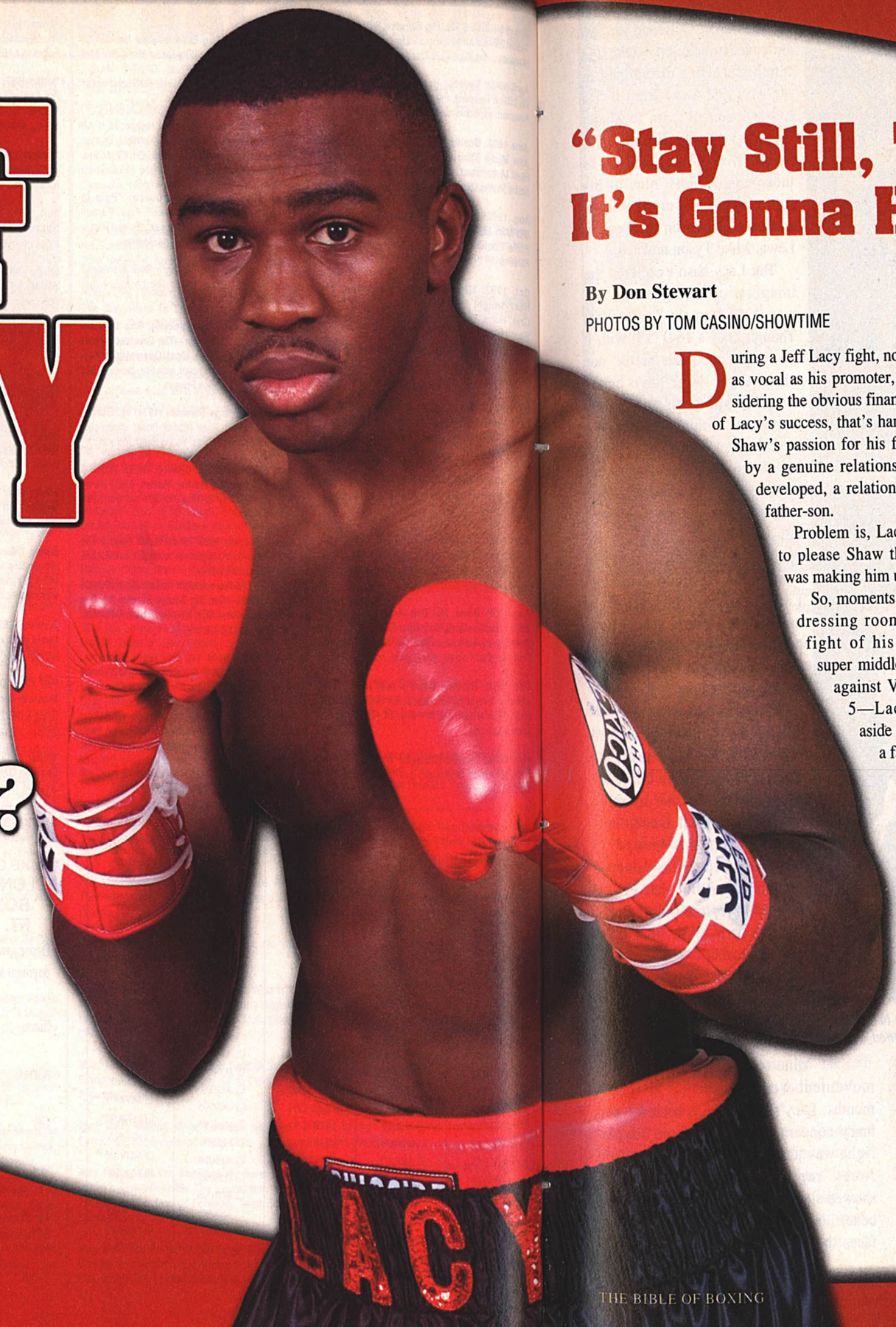


"Stay Still, Trust Me, It's Gonna Happen"

By Don Stewart

PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

During a Jeff Lacy fight, no one at ringside is as vocal as his promoter, Gary Shaw. Considering the obvious financial consequences of Lacy's success, that's hardly shocking. But Shaw's passion for his fighter is enriched by a genuine relationship the two have developed, a relationship bordering on father-son.

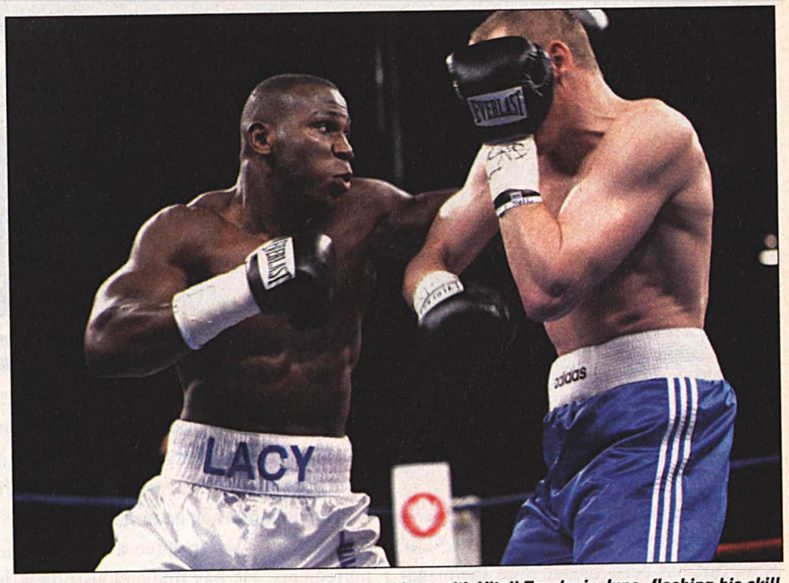
Problem is, Lacy wants so badly to please Shaw that the bellowing was making him uptight.

So, moments before leaving the dressing room for the biggest fight of his career—an IBF super middleweight eliminator against Vitali Tsypko June 5—Lacy pulled Shaw aside and asked him for a favor.

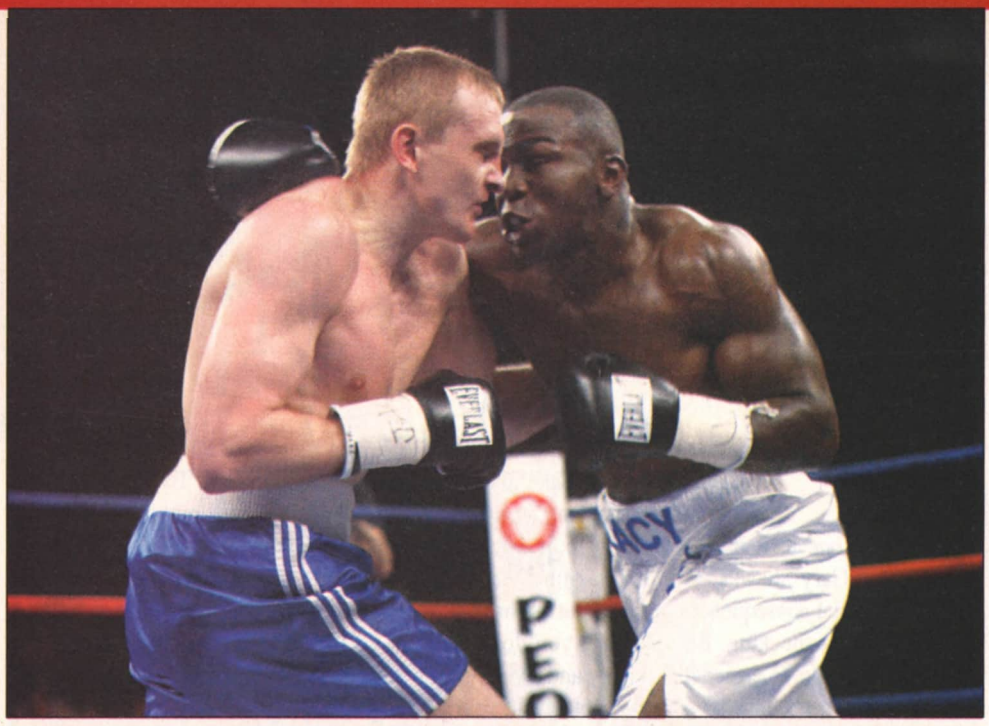
"I told him, 'Gary, look, I'm more of a laid-back type guy. I have to take my time and search and destroy.' By me seeing him squiggling around on his big butt … I'm telling him to stay still, trust me, it's gonna happen. Everyone wants to see a one-, two-, three-round knockout. But what's wrong with a 12th-round knockout? What's wrong with a unanimous decision? I was like, 'Gary, you don't need to do that. I'm just trying to make you happy and trying to stop you screaming and squirming around like you got ants in your pants.'"

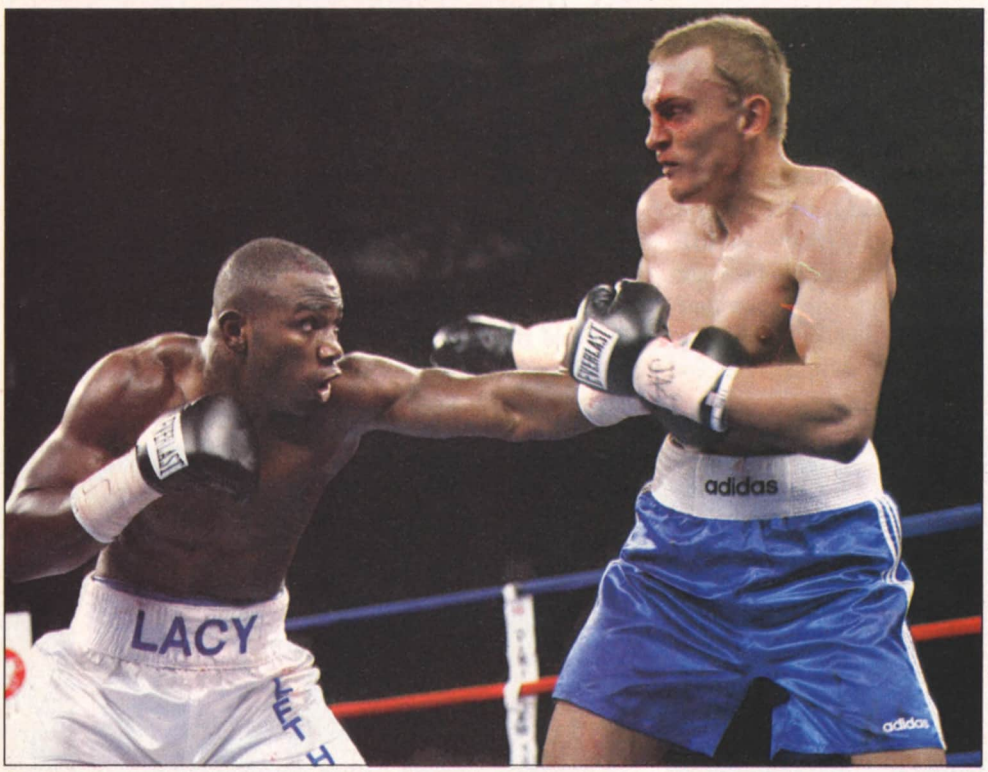
Lacy is 3½ years into his pro career, but the stardom that appeared so destined for him after the Sydney Olympics seems just as far from fruition now as it did then. Like Shaw, the boxing public is starting to get antsy. But Lacy feels he's moving at the right pace. When he talks about his career, it's as if the 27-year-old is saying *stay still, trust me, it's gonna happen.*

Though the Tsypko fight was a two-round no-contest thanks to an accidental headbutt that caused a grotesquely deep gash on the Ukrainian's forehead, the IBF is permitting Lacy to next face Syd Vanderpool for its vacant version of the super middleweight title. A win would give Lacy a chance to be the first member of the 2000 U.S. Olympic class, the first American boxing team since 1948 without a gold medalist, to win a "world" title, albeit an alphabet version.



Lacy controlled nearly every moment of his brief bout with Vitali Tsypko in June, flashing his skill and power for as long as the fight lasted. Unfortunately, the contest reached an unsatisfying conclusion, just the latest bump in the road for the unlucky but undefeated super middleweight.





A clash of heads in the first round (top) opened a nasty gash on Tsypko's forehead (above), leading to a second-round stoppage and a no-contest result. Lacy was extremely disappointed with how the fight turned out, but expects to vie for a vacant alphabet belt in his next fight nonetheless.

"I'm comfortable with what I've accomplished at this point in time," Lacy said.

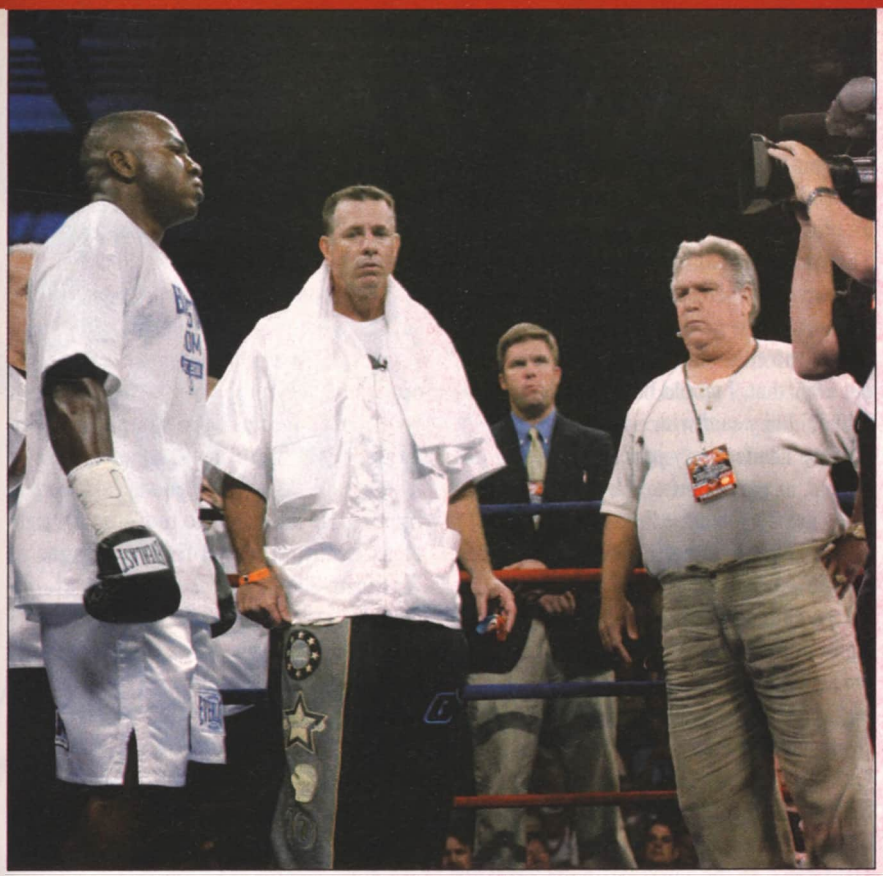
But let's face it, Lacy's division is a lot more wide-open than most. In fact, THE RING title has been vacant since the magazine instituted its new championship policy in the April 2002 issue. Therefore, the IBF title shot shouldn't be mistaken as a sign that the St. Petersburg, Florida, native is living up to the expectations that were heaped on him when he turned pro.

Lacy appears to have all the proper ingredients. He has tremendous power in both fists—his nickname is "Left Hook," but his best punch is his overhand right. He has a chiseled frame that would make Evander Holyfield jealous. He's charismatic, energetic, and intelligent. He's disciplined in the gym and away from it. He has a powerful team in Shaw, manager Shelly Finkel, and advisor Jim Wilkes. Thanks to those connections, nine of his fights have been on Showtime and another was on the Lennox Lewis-Mike Tyson undercard.

But Lacy hasn't captured the imagination of fight fans the way, say, Jermain Taylor has. Though Lacy's 16-0 (13) with 1 no-contest record is pretty, not all of those wins have been. After stopping his first eight opponents within three rounds, he struggled with then-35-year-old Bobby Jones in March of 2002. Jones survived an early ambush and went on to bloody Lacy's nose and beat up his left eye before dropping a close but unanimous 10-round decision. Lacy, who says he hurt both hands in the fourth, sees it as a positive that he pulled out a fight while injured. But the win didn't add much to his rep.

Later, Lacy staggered survivors Ross Thompson and Richard Grant repeatedly en route to decisive wins, but failed to deliver the finisher in either 12-rounder. Last December, Donnell Wiggins landed so many jabs before Lacy stopped him in the eighth that Finkel decided to replace trainer Roger Bloodworth with the busy Freddie Roach.

Before the Tsypko fight, Lacy went back to the underrated Dan Birmingham, the man who had trained him from ages nine to 17. While his jab and movement were worked on in recent months, Lacy's defense has been the primary concern. The abbreviated Tsypko fight was about as meaningful as Roy Jones' rap career, but Lacy feels he showed signs of improvement. We'll get a better idea of how far he's come when he faces the slick and strong Vanderpool, a



Team Lacy includes trainer Dan Birmingham (right of Lacy) and promoter Gary Shaw (far right). Shaw is very close with the fighter, and is usually very nervous and fidgety when Lacy's in the ring.

guy who won't go quickly, if at all.

"I made it to the Olympics without a trainer. I was training myself. Roger Bloodworth, he took me back to the basics. Working with Dan and Freddie Roach, I picked up more aspects from them," said Lacy of the shifting roster of people in his corner. "If I had that going to the Olympics, I think it would have made a world of difference."

But Lacy's jet has yet to truly get off the runway, mostly due to reasons beyond his control. The bad breaks began with his pro debut, which was to be aired on Showtime. During the weigh-in, scheduled opponent Kevin Butts got scared when he saw Lacy with his shirt off. The morning of the fight, Butts was heading for the bus station. Lacy made his debut three weeks later, but the trend has continued. He estimates 20 opponents have pulled out of scheduled fights.

Four months after his scheduled Showtime debut, Lacy appeared on Showtime for the first time, in his third pro bout. He didn't disappoint, dropping Tony Pope with a scary left hook early in the first before a nasty gash forced a stoppage before the end of the round. But during Lacy's 2:27 of work, he broke his left hand. He returned to action four months later, but lost valuable gym time and at least one potential bout due to the injury.

That trend also continued. While the hand injuries suffered against Jones didn't keep him out long, the cut he sustained above his left eye against Grant prompted a five-month layoff. A year later, that cut, the result of a clash of heads in the seventh round, doesn't appear to have fully healed; the eye still looks swollen.

"It's just the way I heal," Lacy explained. "I'm a celluloid healer, where it forms a calcium deposit. If I get hit a couple times, it blows up."

It started to blow up late against Wiggins. Even against Tsypko, it was starting to puff up. But laid-back Lacy isn't worried. He said when the eye swells, it doesn't drop into his line of vision, so it's not a threat. Shaw is a little more concerned. He said he's planning on having Lacy visit a specialist before the Vanderpool fight.

While sparring in preparation for a March 6 bout against Tito Mendoza, Lacy

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suffered another setback when a punch to the head left him seeing double. Examinations revealed he damaged his fourth cranial nerve, causing the blurry vision. The damage wasn't permanent, however, and Lacy was able to put in two months of camp before the Tsypko fight. The ending to that bout looked to be another temporary setback for Lacy before the IBF's ruling.

"If the title shot wouldn't have came out after that, I would have been very frustrated," Lacy said with a laugh. "But I kept it in the hands of my people and they got it done. I'm very comfortable with my team. They get the job done."

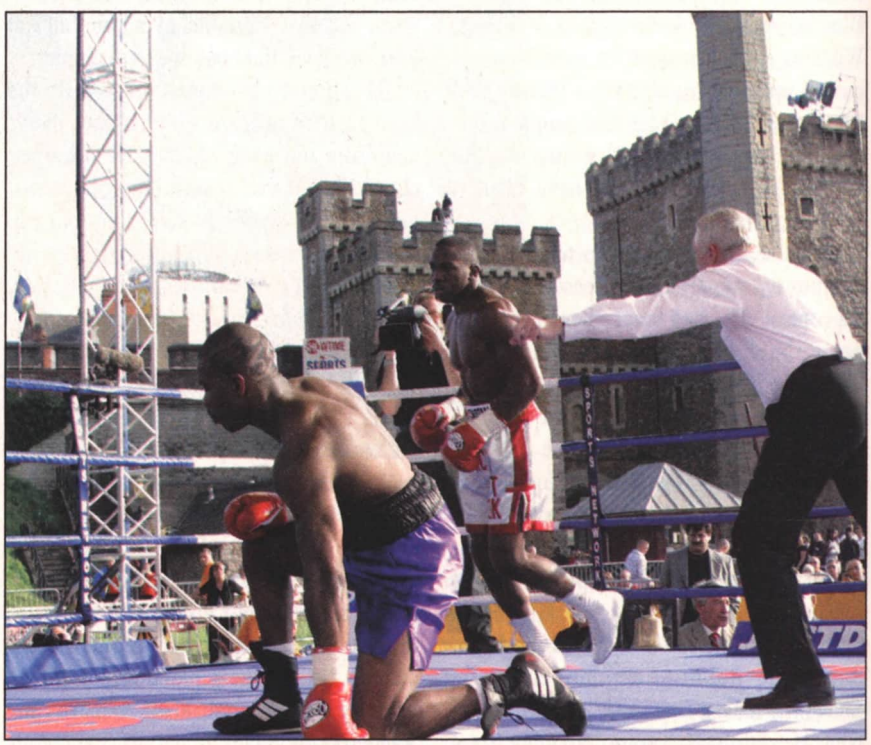
But even a dream team can't create attractive opponents, the lack of which can be the biggest hurdle to stardom for any fighter. Shaw had Lacy fight in the U.K. twice within 15 months in hopes of building hype for title fights against Germany's Sven Ottke and Wales' Joe Calzaghe. But Ottke retired and Calzaghe is moving up to light heavyweight. The remaining leaders of the division are as anonymous to most fight fans as the current lineup of REO Speedwagon. It's in America where Lacy's name is arguably the biggest already.

Despite the loss of Ottke and Calzaghe, much of the division's remaining talent is foreign. The WBC's beltholder, Cristian Sanavia, has never fought outside of Europe and has only ventured outside of his native Italy twice, and now that the WBC is bankrupt, it doesn't make much difference anyway. Danny Green and Anthony Mundine are known guys ... in Australia.

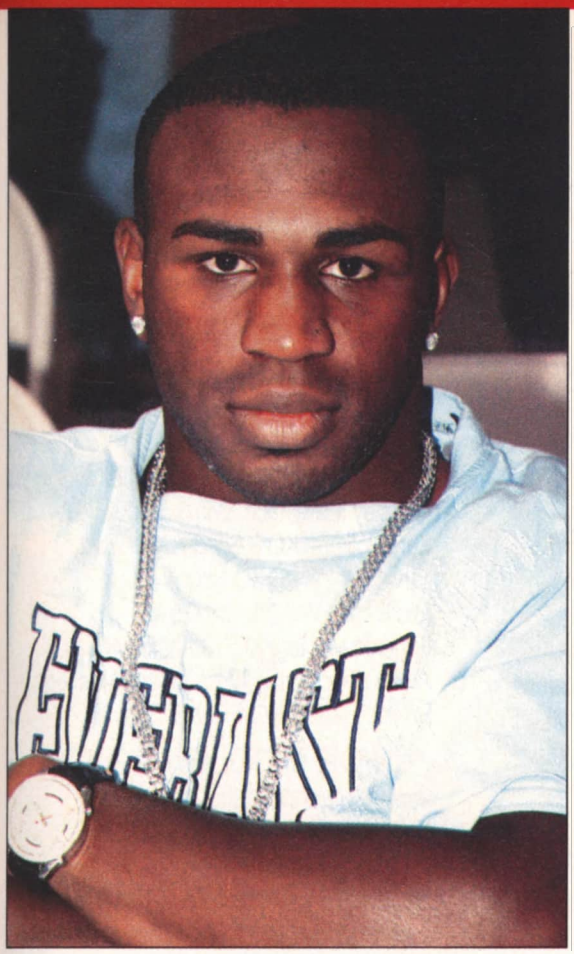
"Everyone needs an opponent," Shaw said. "The right opponent. Leonard, Hagler, Hearns. People need the right opponent. Tsypko, with all due respect, will never make Lacy a star. Jermain Taylor could make Lacy a star. It's gonna take certain fights, it's gonna take certain fighters. He may have to move up a weight class eventually and fight Calzaghe or Antonio Tarver or somebody at 175 pounds."

As for moving *down* to face Taylor, Lacy said he could do that if he has to, though he admits he couldn't sustain that weight. Taylor has a contract with HBO, but Lacy has no formal contract with Showtime, meaning the network rivalry wouldn't get in the way of the potential matchup. Though their meeting is at least a year away from making sense, the two could be on a collision course.

"I don't believe that he's late blooming at all," Shaw said. "I think if you did a



Earlier in his career, Lacy campaigned in Europe a fair amount (he's pictured knocking out Jason Collins in one round in Cardiff, Wales). The idea was to build an eventual fight with Joe Calzaghe or Sven Ottke, but Ottke retired in '04, and Calzaghe is preparing to abandon the 168-pound division.



It's been a frustrating ride so far for the 27-year-old Lacy, but he's hanging in there and looking forward to a defining fight. Shaw acknowledges, however, that "Left Hook" may have to move up to light heavyweight to find it.

story on Rocky Juarez or Francisco Bojado or Miguel Cotto or any of the Olympic kids, it would be the same. None of them are superstars. That doesn't mean somebody can't be a star or a superstar, but they each need a defining fight and a defining fighter to fight. It may take Jermain Taylor to make Jeff Lacy, and Jeff Lacy to make Jermain Taylor."

Indeed, the 2000 Olympic class is being moved more cautiously than previous classes. The '96 group, for example, saw Fernando Vargas, David Reid, and Floyd Mayweather win titles within two years of turning pro. Those guys were also matched tougher early on as they began building their roads to stardom (or in Reid's case, shooting stardom).

While Lacy's level of opposition has been steadily increased, Vanderpool represents a giant leap forward.

"I think times may be different," Shaw said. "Everyone says, 'Well, it's four years now since the Olympics.' What the press fails to realize is if we move a kid and he gets beat, then the question becomes, 'What's the rush?' So we as managers and promoters are in a tough spot. I admit, I've held Lacy back."

Injuries, bad luck, sub-par showings, and a lack of known opponents at 168 have also conspired to hold him back. But maybe those superstar expectations were unfair. Though he had more than 200 amateur fights, Lacy turned pro with plenty of developing left to do. Apparently, he was relying too much on his power at times, making him more one-dimensional than most observers thought. Vanderpool, 35-2 (23) and unbeaten in seven starts since losing to Bernard Hopkins in 2000, is the type of fighter who could exploit that if Lacy's skills haven't progressed.

But if he gets by Vanderpool, the opportunity to rule 168 is there. The fighters who would create the most problems for Lacy are mobile boxers, but, in recent years, super middleweight has been filled with the likes of Charles Brewer, Thomas Tate, and James Butler, brawlers who move in one direction.

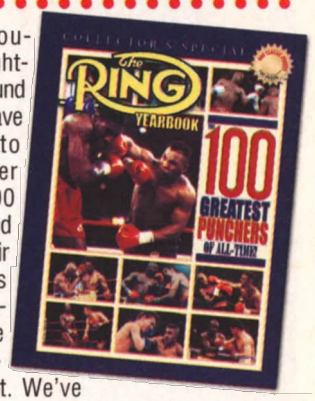
Lacy has enough going for him to win a title and make some defenses. He loves to hit, and doesn't seem to mind being hit. That, combined with his power, should make for exciting fights. But taking it to the next level? Making fans eager to dig deep to see him on pay-per-view? The jury's still out, and while Lacy feels he's destined to become a star eventually, he's willing to let it happen slowly.

"We were expecting to fight for a title in my fourth year," he said. "With injuries and everything that has happened to me in my career, I feel right now I'm right on track."

In other words, stay still, trust him. It's going to happen. ■

Don Stewart covers boxing for the Reading (Pennsylvania) Eagle and is an occasional contributor to this magazine.

BOXING'S GREATEST PUNCHERS



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SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Sinan Samil Sam KO 5 Edgar Kalnars
Clifford Etienne W 8 Onebo Maxime
Robert Wiggins KO 2 Marvin Hunt
Kendrick Releford W 10 Ramon Garbey
Matt Skelton KO 4 Bob Mirovic
David Defiagbon KO 5 Ron Guerrero
Malcolm Tann W 8 Willie Chapman
Julius Long KO 6 Nicolay Popov
Fernely Feliz KO 2 Wallace McDaniel

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Dale Brown W 12 Robert Daniels
Vincenzo Cantatore D 12 Rudiger May
Krzysztof Wlodarczyk KO 6 Alain Simon
Valery Brudov KO 3 Radoslav Milutinovic
Chris Thomas KO 2 Rich LaMontagne
Guru Singh W 10 Jermell Barnes
Mark Hobson KO 6 Lee Swaby

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Derrick Harmon W 10 David Telesco
Omar Sheika W 10 Manu Ntoh
Juan Carlos Gimenez W 12 Valmir Rosario
Prince Badi Ajamu W 10 Derrick Whitley
Elvis Michailenko W 10 Giovanni Alvarez
Paul Murdoch KO 3 Situini Naea
Richard Grant D 6 Shannon Miller

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Cristian Sanavia W 12 Markus Beyer
(Wins WBC Title)
Mikkel Kessler KO 11 Andre Thysse
Scott Pemberton KO 8 Rick Camlin
Jeff Lacy No-Contest 2 Vitali Tsypko
Troy Rowland W 10 Kenny Ellis
Randy Griffin Tech. Win 7 Levan Easley
Carl Froch KO 11 Mark Woolnough
Robert Stieglitz W 12 Djamel Selini
Nader Hamdan KO 3 Steve Wood

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Bernard Hopkins W 12 Robert Allen
(Retains World Title)
Oscar De La Hoya W 12 Felix Sturm
Kingsley Ikeke Tech. Win 8 Freddie Cuevas
Sam Soliman KO 3 Sakda Sorpakdi
Tarvis Simms KO 10 Jameel Wilson
Eric Regan W 12 Pedro Ortega
Eugenio Montero KO 10 Anthony Farnell
Arsen Khachatrian W 12 Tshepo Mashego
Ronald Hearns KO 1 Phillip Trosclair

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Verno Phillips KO 6 Carlos Bojorquez
(Wins Vacant IBF Title)
Javier Castillejo KO 5 Enrique Campos
Simone Rotolo W 12 William Gare
Joshua Clottey W 10 Lloyd Joseph
Sebastian Lujan KO 1 Ariel Aparicio
Toshiharu Kayama KO 2 Hyunjung Lee
Matthew Hatton KO 4 Matt Scriven

WELTERWEIGHTS

Steve Forbes KO 2 Arthur Cruz
Victoriano Sosa W 10 Marteze Logan
Chris Smith KO 12 Luis Hernandez
Eduardo Sanchez KO 6 Jose Celaya
Jackson Osei Bonsu KO 8
Maxim Nesterenko
Walter Matthysse KO 2 Ruben Oliva
Ray Sanchez KO 3 James Johnson

PHOTO BY RICHARD ESPOSITO

Light heavyweight David Telesco launches a right hand at Derrick Harmon

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

In his pro debut, welterweight Nick Casal drops Anthony Nelson

Marlon Thomas W 8 Elias Cruz
Jadschi Green KO 10 Luis Alberto Santiago
Nick Casal KO 3 Anthony Nelson

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Ricky Hatton W 12 Carlos Wilfredo Vilches
Junior Witter KO 2 Salvatore Battaglia
Masakazu Satake KO 6 Ubaldo Hernandez
Juan Carlos Rodriguez KO 6
Fernando Mena
Wilfredo Negron W 12 Arturo Morua
Jane Couch W 10 Jaime Clampitt

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Jose Luis Castillo W 12 Juan Lazcano
(Wins Vacant World Title)
Julio Pablo Chacon KO 5 Jairo Dos Santos
Efren Hinojosa No-Contest 3 Yoni Vargas
Graham Earl W 12 Bobby Vanzie
Miguel Huerta W 10 Rolando Reyes
Almazbek Raimkulov KO 1 Raymond Narh

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Oscar Larios W 10 Jesus Perez
(Non-Title Bout)
Mzonke Fana W 12 Randy Suico
Daniel Attah W 8 James Baker
Janos Nagy KO 7 Zukile Khandisa
Akinori Kanai KO 1 Robert Oyan

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Chris John W 12 Osamu Sato
Spend Abazi W 12 Lehlo Ledwaba
Daniel Ponce-DeLeon W 10
Carlos Contreras
Robert Guerrero KO 8 Enrique Sanchez
Jorge Martinez W 12 Juan Carlos Ramirez
Saohin Sithchai Condo KO 4 Yuri Zharkov
Humberto Soto KO 6 Wilson Alcorro
Ruben Estanislao W 10 Juan Ruiz
Sammy Ventura W Disq. 6 Gerardo Zayas

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Mahyar Monshipour KO 8 Salim Medjkoune
(Retains WBA Title)
Mauricio Martinez W 8 Hugo Vargas
Cuauhtemoc Vargas KO 7 Erik Rodriguez
Phillip Payne KO 10 Al Seeger
Yasuo Kunimi KO 7 Jimrex Jaca
Clarence Vinson W 8 Paulino Villalobos

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Khulile Makeba KO 2 Sonnyboy Magazi
Frederic Patrac KO 1 David Guerault
Saenghiran Lookbanyai W 12 Rolly Lunas
Cecilio Santos KO 3 Dario Azuaga

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Masaki Nakanuma KO 8 Edgar Rodrigo
Aldo Valtierra W 12 Juan Sarabia
Prosper Matsuura KO 3
Pongsak Pongcharoen
Regina Halmich W 10 Daisy Lang

FLYWEIGHTS

Lorenzo Parra W 12 Takefumi Sakata
(Retains WBA Title)
Pichit Siriwat W 6 Gerald Ubatay
Brian Viloria KO 11 Gilberto Keb-Baas
Everardo Morales W 12 Juan Centeno
Daisuke Naito Tech. Win 6 Hiroshi Nakano
Satoshi Takahashi KO 4 Toshishun

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Gerardo Verde KO 6 Victor Rojas
Edgar Sosa KO 5 Branni Guerrero

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The RING

FIGHTER of the MONTH

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Has there been a more consistently underrated fighter in the sport over the last several years than Jose Luis Castillo? No matter what he does or against whom he proves his worth, the Mexican is always the underdog in big fights. Even though he exceeds expectations every time out, the expectations somehow remain low for his next contest.

Despite having won about as many rounds as he lost over a four-fight span against pound-for-pounders Stevie Johnston and Floyd Mayweather, a lot of fans and experts wrote Castillo off going into his June bout with the far less proven Juan Lazcano. Sure, Lazcano was a bit younger and was riding a longer winning streak, but that didn't justify making Castillo an underdog. And over 12 rounds, Castillo proved that point.

It was close for a while, especially after Lazcano rallied in the middle rounds, but by the last three stanzas, Castillo was handing out an unmerciful beating. He was just too good and too strong, and he won a close but clear unanimous decision to earn the vacant RING lightweight title and end Lazcano's win streak at 19. He also left Lazcano facially unrecognizable—a gruesome reminder that Castillo shouldn't be an underdog next time out.

• • • •

Jose Luis Castillo

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Jean-Marc Mormeck W 12 Virgil Hill

Brakpan, South Africa: Some 15 years and 20 pounds past his very best, former light heavyweight and cruiserweight titlist Hill never had much of a chance at winning his rematch with the younger, much stronger Mormeck, who had taken the WBA cruiserweight title away from Hill in February '02 via eighth-round stoppage. But the 40-year-old Hill obviously didn't see it that way and tried his best to pull an upset at the Carnival City Arena, only to come up a few points short. While Mormeck gave Hill a frightful pounding in spots, Hill showed exceptional toughness, survived the Frenchman's onslaught, and won over the judges in the closer rounds to keep things interesting. Mormeck got the deserved unanimous nod, but only barely.

Pressure fighter Mormeck, 196, began backing up Hill, 194¾, Bismarck, North Dakota, from the opening bell, although not much was landing cleanly, thanks to "Quicksilver's" still sharp defensive abilities. At the end of the second round, Mormeck got in his first serious strike—but it came after the bell and didn't officially count. Hill had already dropped his hands at the bell before two extra punches came flying at him, and the older fighter slumped to the canvas in what looked like an act designed to cost Mormeck a point. South African referee Wally Snowball merely gave the titlist a severe warning, however, and Hill staggered back to his corner.

Over the next few rounds, Mormeck was pressing the fight while Hill was focused primarily on survival, but the ex-titlist kept Mormeck off-balance with his lateral movement and flurried frequently enough to give the judges something to think about. In the sixth and seventh rounds, however, Mormeck really began to dish out a beating, Hill's chin and resolve the only things keeping the fight going. It got even worse for Hill in the eighth, as he touched the canvas following a right to the jaw. Ref Snowball ruled it a knockdown, much to the chagrin of Hill, who was obviously still trying to win.

Mormeck, 31, retained control in the ninth and 10th, but the challenger made a comeback in the 11th, boxing on his toes and scoring with combinations. Hill did reasonably well in the 12th also, but all it did was make his defeat extremely narrow (perhaps more so than it really should have been). Judge Franco Priami (Italy) had Mormeck, 30-2 (21), ahead by just a 115-114 margin, while Arthur Ellensohn (Germany) and Joe Horn (South Africa) saw the Frenchman on top by matching scores of 115-113.

Hill, 49-5 (23), announced his retirement in the ring immediately afterward—but by the next day, he'd taken it back, saying he'd have to think about it before making an official decision.

Promoters: Rodney Berman, Don King

(5-22-04)

PHOTO BY ALEXANDER JOE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Mormeck slips inside a hook from game Hill

Cristian Sanavia W 12 Markus Beyer

Chemnitz, Germany: Signs of Beyer's vulnerability as WBC super middleweight titleholder had become abundant. He had been fortunate to take the belt from Canadian Eric Lucas on a dubious decision, and even more fortunate when Australia's Danny Green dominated him before being disqualified last year. Sanavia, 166½, Piove di Sacco, Italy, was selected as a potential soft touch before an anticipated rematch with Green, but Beyer, 167½, Cologne, Germany, could not raise his game and lost his title by split decision at the Chemnitz Arena. He was making his third defense of his second title reign.

The 29-year-old challenger had been beaten only once before, but his record had been built up against a variety of nondescript opponents. His campaigns had also been waged predominantly at middleweight, and the truth was that he ought not to have troubled Beyer, 29-2 (11), had the 33-year-old been able to summon some of the spirit of old. In his only defeat, Sanavia, 33-1 (12), had been beaten in seven rounds by ordinary Frenchman Morrade Hakkar, but seven wins since had convinced him that he could bridge the eight-pound gap between middleweight and super middle and claim Beyer's belt.

"I believe that my boxing ability will be decisive," he promised.

He was almost as good as his word. With Beyer subdued from the outset, Sanavia seized the initiative immediately, sticking his right jab into his fellow southpaw's face and controlling the action thereafter.

"The jab was definitely the key in the early rounds," Sanavia said. "A lot of people may have been surprised, but I knew this was a fight I would win—even though it turned out close in the end."

The Italian was accurate with his hooks and uppercuts as well as the jab as he accumulated a substantial lead. Beyer looked impotent, unable to take away his opponent's jab and assert himself in the way his home supporters had expected. It was no classic matchup, many of the rounds appearing repetitious as Sanavia chiseled away without ever threatening a stoppage.

In the 10th, Beyer did manage to break through with a solid left that forced Sanavia back and he also landed a right hook before the challenger regained his composure. But Beyer's charge to the finish line had come too late, and Sanavia was able to safely negotiate the final couple of rounds to take the decision.

Larry O'Connell (England) scored 115-114 for Beyer, but Humbert Furgoni (France) and Pedrag Aleksic (Serbia) both saw Sanavia the winner, by scores of 116-115 and 116-113, respectively. THE RING scored for Sanavia, 115-113. The referee was Mark Green (England).

Promoter: Wilfried Sauerland

(6-5-04)

Brian Doogan

Lorenzo Parra W 12 Takefumi Sakata

Tokyo, Japan: Unbeaten WBA flyweight ruler Parra, 112, Venezuela, was successful in his first defense, but, surprisingly, had a much tougher time with little-known Japanese challenger Sakata, 112, than he did when he claimed the title against heavily favored Eric Morel last December in Bayamon, Puerto Rico. Against Sakata at the Ariake Coliseum, Parra, 25, squeaked by with a hairline majority decision.

Early on, it didn't look like it would be too tough for the Venezuelan, as he displayed his vaunted speed and skills to capture

PHOTO BY TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Parra raises his arm at the end of the 12th round

the first three rounds on all three judges' cards. But he had a very tough time coping with the persistent body attacks of his challenger in the middle rounds, leaving the fight still within the reach of the 24-year-old Sakata entering the championship rounds. Parra, 23-0 (17), would not be denied, though, and he outpunched and outmaneuvered Sakata, 22-2-1 (9), down the stretch to convince the judges he'd done enough. Luis Pabon (Puerto Rico) had it even at 114-114, but Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa) had the Venezuelan ahead 115-113, and Mark Taylor (Australia) had him winning handily, 117-111.

The referee was John Coyle (England).

Promoter: Kyoei Promotions

(6-4-04)

Joe Koizumi

Chris John W 12 Osamu Sato

Tokyo, Japan: Unbeaten John, 124½, Indonesia, made excellent use of his footwork, occasionally switched to a southpaw stance, and consistently counterpunched former 122-pound titleholder Sato, 126, Japan, to win a unanimous verdict over 12 rounds at the Ariake Coliseum. Although Juan Manuel Marquez is recognized by the WBA as their "unified" featherweight king, they also recognize John as a WBA featherweight beltholder, and this was his first defense of the utterly meaningless trinket.

On the card of Erkki Meronen (Finland), John didn't lose a round, although Meronen scored the fourth even to come up with a

PHOTO BY TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

John scores with a clean hook against Sato

120-109 card. Philippe Verbeke (Belgium) had it 117-111, and Minyoung Lee (Korea) saw it the closest at 116-113. The referee was Luis Pabon (Puerto Rico).

With the win, John advanced to 34-0 (19), while Sato, who has now won just one of his last four fights, fell to 27-3-3 (16).

Promoter: Kyoei Promotions

(6-4-04)

Joe Koizumi

Mahyar Monshipour KO 8 Salim Medjkoune

Clermont-Ferrand, France: Something about the way Monshipour goes about his work has persuaded former middleweight contender Jean-Claude Bouttier to describe him as "Little Tyson," a sobriquet that suited the 29-year-old well in his rematch with Medjkoune at The Zenith. The finish was brutal and conclusive, and the result ratified Monshipour's WBA super bantamweight title-winning effort last year against Medjkoune, in which he prevailed by 12th round stoppage. This was his second defense.

Fighting in the ex-titleholder's hometown, Monshipour, 121¾, Poitiers, France, via Tehran, Iran, shrugged off any disadvantage he might have been facing. His demeanor conveyed a kind of cold confidence that culminated almost inevitably in the clinical finish. He was relentless until his swarming assault led to the demise of 32-year-old Medjkoune, 121, Clermont-Ferrand, France.

Nothing was going to deny Monshipour supremacy over his rival, not even a cut beneath his right eyebrow in the opening round, caused by an unintentional headbutt. The blood did not become a factor. Medjkoune was penalized by referee Daniel Talon (France) shortly after when he used his head more blatantly, but Monshipour exacted his own retribution more ruthlessly. He did lose his cool initially, however, and this left him open to some hooks and straight lefts from the southpaw challenger, leaving Monshipour nursing a cut over his left eye by the third round, too. But once he settled again into a more detached mode, Monshipour reclaimed control.

Medjkoune, 43-5-1 (21), did make it as difficult as he could, utilizing his jab to try to keep the aggressive champion at bay. But he was never going to be able to sustain this for 12 rounds. A right uppercut and left hook stopped Medjkoune in his tracks, and by the end of the sixth, he was tiring visibly. Two rounds later, Monshipour, 25-2-2 (16), sensed that Medjkoune's resistance had all but ebbed away and he stepped up his attack. A left hook to the jaw and a sickening right to the body put Medjkoune down hard, and though he got back to his feet, he had nothing left. A follow-up salvo by Monshipour persuaded Talon to intervene at the 2:00 mark of the eighth, not a second too soon for the overwhelmed Medjkoune.

A couple of weeks later, Monshipour flew to the Iranian city of Bam, where he has become involved in a hospital project following the terrible earthquakes that hit the country last December.

(5-28-04)

Promoter: AB Stars Productions

Brian Doogan ■

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New Face

(Continued from page 24)

exposure beforehand, the whole experience was overwhelming. His world hasn't been the same since.

"I didn't realize what happened," said the 23-year-old Holt, 15-0 (11). "I didn't realize how big this was. Boxing doesn't even make *SportsCenter* usually. This is what I've been working hard for. I was there in the spotlight. Before that, I wasn't being seen on TV or in THE RING magazine. I think I have skills that are equal to or greater than a lot of world champions today. A lot of those guys aren't better than me. I wanted the attention. It's all I wanted."

After beating Reyes, Holt paid a visit to the hotel room of his trainer, Aroz Gist. Holt was just looking to unwind when he popped in at around 1 a.m. Gist was relaxing on his bed, watching *SportsCenter*. The show was about to break for a commercial, when a quick tease of Holt's knockout appeared.

Minutes later, police were suddenly pounding on Gist's hotel door, responding to complaints of a commotion in the room. It was just Holt jumping up and down and screaming at the TV, "I'm on *SportsCenter*! I'm on *SportsCenter*!"

Holt explained the situation to the officers, who left the Paterson, New Jersey, fighter with a quick warning to "just keep it down."

But there is no keeping Holt down now. Not after he seized the national TV exposure all fighters crave. Admittedly lax with his training habits in the past, Holt is now working more diligently than at any other time in his career. Where once he used to be embarrassed doing roadwork, he's been running hard since tasting the attention success brings.

"This was the life I was supposed to have three years ago," Holt said. "What people don't know is that they're going to be impressed by my skills, by my hand speed and foot movement. The punch was intended to be a dangerous bodypunch (it landed on Reyes' jaw), and I never really hurt anyone like that before with that punch. But the thing now is there's no room for error. Everyone is on my side right now, but I know that if I lose, a lot of people would forget me. That's something I'm always aware of.

"The week after my fight with Reyes, I was going through the velvet rope with rap stars, while they were playing my fight in the background. They never gave me any attention like that before. I don't even think they knew who I was. But I've learned from other people's mistakes. I know one minute you're top of the world, the next moment, you're not anywhere. I haven't even scratched the surface yet of what I'm capable of doing. I want more attention. I want more fame. Anytime there is a camera around, I want to be there. I want to be on the front line. This was a taste of it. Now I'm getting back in the gym and training even harder."

Training for Holt used to be a chore, like washing dishes or putting out the trash. But Holt was introduced to boxing by an odd and tragic set of circumstances. His mother, Debra Holt, has been in prison for manslaughter since Holt was six. His father, Barry Porter Sr., was never around in Holt's youth, so Holt and his older brother, Barry Porter Jr., bounced from group home to group home until the boys finally moved in with their father in Paterson when Kendall was seven.

Barry Porter Sr. was determined not to let his sons get sucked up by the streets, winding up in jail or dead like many inner-city kids. Porter Sr. saw boxing as their outlet.

Holt sparred in the backyard against neighborhood kids including his brother, who was 20 pounds heavier and six inches taller than he was. Holt ran through a local park and down local streets with a weighted vest.

"I was a teenager running around all of the time, and people in the neighborhood used to think there was something wrong with me," Holt recalled, laughing. "I hated it. I hated training. I was a kid; I wanted to hang out and play video games. I couldn't stand my dad. I hated boxing. I was actually embarrassed to run up and down the street when I was a kid. I didn't want people to see me running. It was just embarrassing."

Besides his disdain for training, Holt also discovered something else about boxing at an early age—he was good at it. By the time he was 16, he won the New Jersey Novice Golden Gloves 139-pound title. The next two years, he won the open Golden Gloves 139-pound titles. He fought in a number of national tournaments, only to lose because he spent more of his free time hanging out than working on conditioning.

Holt, who is promoted by Duva Boxing, thought his talent and exceptional hand and foot speed would be enough to keep him winning, an attitude flaw he's since addressed.

"Kendall changed his whole program around," said Gist, who has worked with Holt since 2003. "He always had a problem with being in shape and he saw he needed a change. When I got him, he already had ability. Once he develops his style a little more, he's going to be someone to reckon with. He has power with both hands and he knows that. Kendall just needs patience. He's hungry and he wants everything right now. If he stays in the gym and he stays focused, there's no telling what Kendall can do.

"The ESPN thing has worked for him. Everyone watches *SportsCenter*. We're from a small town in Paterson, where everyone knows everyone. When he saw that attention, he came to the gym an hour earlier and left an hour later. He's starting to be a gym rat; I have to kick him out of the gym. Everyone looks up to the kid now."

Like his mother, who's now living in a women's halfway house. Holt has maintained contact with her through the years, but the first time she ever saw him fight was the Reyes knockout on ESPN. The next day, Holt paid a visit.

"The women at the house saw me in the local newspaper and asked my mother if she knew who this guy was with the same last name as hers," Holt said. "She said, 'Yes, that's my son.' She was surprised. I visited the house, and all these women were all over me. I felt like a star. It was everything I've been working for. That knockout, that one punch did change my life."

And his name, for a few days in March. ■

BACK ISSUES OF KO

Back issues of several editions of *KO Magazine,* the acknowledged leader in boxing journalism, are still available in limited quantity. Since its inception in 1980, *KO* has become known for its quality stories and columns and peak-action photographs. Don't delay. Supplies are running out!

June 1983: WBA Jr. Middleweight Champion Davey Moore: Bracing For Duran's Last Stand. Color Pinup: Donald Curry. Interview: Pinklon Thomas. Also: Duran-Cuevas, Hagler-Sibson.

Aug. 1983: Michael Spinks: King Of The Light Heavyweights ... But The Glory Can't Erase The Sadness. Color Pinup: Johnny Bumphus. Interview: Jones & Rappaport. Also: Jones-McCrory, Pryor-Arguello II preview, world's best fighter poll, Jeff Chandler, Mark Breland, Leon Spinks.

Oct. 1983: Is Larry Holmes Finished? Color Pinup: Greg Page. Interview: Marvis Frazier. Also: Marvin Hagler, Bobby Chacon, Jack Dempsey.

July 1984: Donald Curry: "I'm Better Under Pressure." Color Pinup: Gerrie Coetzee. Interview: Curry. Also: Pipino Cuevas, John Mugabi, Bill Costello, M. Spinks-Davis.

Aug. 1984: WBC Heavyweight Champion Terrible Tim Witherspoon: A Superstar Of Tomorrow? Color Pinup: Rocky Lockridge. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Also: Marvin Hagler, Gomez-LaPorte.

Oct. 1984: Golden Boy Mark Breland: Can He Be The Next Sugar Ray? Color Pinup: Jaime Garza. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Bramble-Mancini, Sugar Ray Leonard.

Nov. 1984: Thomas Hearns: "Hagler Is Shakin' Like A Leaf On A Tree!" Color Pinup: Tim Witherspoon. Interview: Livingstone Bramble. Also: Rosario-Davis, Marlon Starling.

Feb. 1985: Gerry Cooney: How Far Can He Go This Time? Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Ray Mancini. Also: Dream fights, Hector Camacho.

March 1985: Next For Marvelous Marvin Hagler: The Only Fight That Really Matters. Color Pinup: Mike McCallum. Interview: Thomas Hearns. Also: Santos-Medal, Meza-Garza, Holmes-Bonecrusher.

May 1985: Thomas Hearns: *KO* Fighter Of The Year. Color Pinup: Gerry Cooney. Also: Camacho-Ramirez, Truth Williams, Year In Review.

July 1985: Aaron Pryor: Has Hawk Time Run Out? Color Pinup: Donald Curry. Interview: Greg Page. Also: Ray Mancini, James Shuler, Costello-Hatcher.

Aug. 1985: King Cobra: "Hagler-Hearns Is Done And I'm Better Than Both Of Them!" Color Pinup: John Mugabi. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Larry Holmes, Roberto Duran, DeWitt-Lee.

Oct. 1985: Still Champ After All These Years: Larry Holmes—A Legend Continues To Grow. Interview: Mark Breland. Also: Michael Spinks, Milton McCrory, Wilfredo Gomez.

Nov. 1985: McGuigan! The Pluck Of The Irish. Also: Julio Cesar Chavez, Thomas-Weaver, Donald Curry, featherweights.

Dec. 1985: Pinklon Thomas: "Larry Holmes Betrayed Boxing." Color Pinup: Hagler-Mugabi. Also: Mike McCallum, Tyrell Biggs, Camacho-Ramirez.

Jan. 1986: Macho Mania! Hector Camacho Takes Aim At 10 Tough Targets. Color Pinup: Jimmy Paul. Interview: Alexis Arguello. Also: Truth Williams, Curry-McCrory.

Feb. 1986: King Michael: How Long Will He Rule The Heavyweights? Also: Barry McGuigan, Shawn O'Sullivan, Spinks-Holmes, *Rocky IV,* world's best fighter poll.

July 1986: Tyson, McGuigan, Hagler: The Stars Catch Fire And Boxing Is Hot Again! Color Pinup: Azumah Nelson. Also: Camacho-Chavez.

Oct. 1986: They're Back!!! The Cooney Circus Returns. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Also: Jimmy Paul, Mike Tyson, Donald Curry.

Dec. 1986: Larry Holmes' Message To Mike Tyson: "Show Me You Can Kick My Butt!" Color pinup: Mark Breland. Interview: Holmes. Also: Witherspoon-Bruno, Evander Holyfield, Cruz-McGuigan, Danny Lopez.

Feb. 1987: Upset Of The Decade: Has Honeyghan Cut Short The Curry Era? Color Pinup: Marvin Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Edwin Rosario, Hector Camacho.

June 1987: New WBA Welterweight Champion Mark Breland: He's Got A Lot To Smile About. Interview: Marvin Hagler. Color Pinup: Greg Haugen. Also: Michael Olajide, Carlos Monzon.

Aug. 1987: Sweet Victory! Sugar Ray Humbles Hagler. Color Pinup: Leonard vs. Hagler. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Also: Spinks-Cooney preview, Donald Curry.

Oct. 1987: Greatness Beckons: When Will Mike Tyson Answer The Call? Color Pinup: Michael Olajide. Interview: Tyrell Biggs. Also: Paz-Haugen, Marvin Hagler.

Nov. 1987: Michael Spinks: The War With Tyson Is Okay With Him. Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: Frankie Duarte. Also: Matthew Hilton, Hagler-Czyz.

Dec. 1987: Mike Tyson: Undisputed Heavyweight King—But Is He Losing His Loyal Subjects? Color Pinup: Matthew Hilton. Interview: Barry McGuigan. Also: Aaron Pryor, Mike McCallum.

Jan. 1988: The Collapse Of A Hero: Why Breland Never Hit The Mark Of Greatness. Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Michael Nunn, Alexis Arguello, lightweights.

Feb. 1988: Pazienza & Haugen Go For Each Other's Throats. Color Pinup: Marlon Starling. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Tate-Olajide, ESPN Boxing.

May 1988: *KO* Exclusive—Mike Tyson, As Only Mike Tyson Knows Him. Color Pinup: Mike McCallum. Interview: Thomas Hearns. Also: Tyson-Spinks poll, Michael Dokes, Virgil Hill.

July 1988: Superfight History Dictates: Don't Expect The Expected From Tyson-Spinks. Color Pinup: Roger Mayweather. Interview: Dr. Ferdie Pacheco. Also: Roberto Duran, Azumah Nelson, Barkley-Olajide.

Aug. 1988: Tyson-Spinks: *KO's* Fearless Forecast Of Superfight '88. Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Matthew Hilton. Also: Lockridge-Knight, Evander Holyfield, Lloyd Honeyghan.

Sept. 1988: Tyson-Spinks, The Aftermath—What If Tyson Wins; What If Spinks Wins? Color Pinup: Frank Tate. Interview: Marlon Starling. Also: Barry McGuigan, Simon Brown, risk-taking.

Oct. 1988: Middleweight Terrorism: Iran Bombs The Hit Man. Color Pinup: Don Lalonde. Interview: Frank Bruno. Also: Roger Mayweather, Marvin Hagler.

Dec. 1988: Sugar Ray's Comeback: Why? Color Pinup: Simon Brown. Interview: Kevin Rooney. Also: Michael Nunn, best fighter poll, welterweight wars.

Jan. 1989: The Troubled Times Of Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Lloyd Honeyghan. Interview: Gil Clancy. Also: Meldrick Taylor, Jeff Fenech, Boxing's Champs.

Feb. 1989: George Foreman Is Born Again. Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Bill Cayton. Also: The Olympics, Davey Hilton, John Mugabi, Barry McGuigan.

Aug. 1989: Special 100th Issue. Color Pinup: Hagler vs. Hearns. Also: The *KO* Years, 50 most influential people, '80s ratings, best of *KO* Interview, year-by-year review, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Sept. 1989: "I Beat Up Tyson Before, I'll Do It Again," by Carl Williams. Color Pinup: Michael Nunn. Also: Chavez-Mayweather, Brian Mitchell, Marv Albert.

Feb. 1990: George Foreman Risks A Multimillion-Dollar Shot At Tyson. Color Pinup: Brian Mitchell. Interview: Riddick Bowe. Also: Simon Brown, Molina-Lopez, East vs. West.

June 1990: A Sugar-Free Future? Thomas Hearns Is Looking Up. Color Pinup: Glenn McCrory. Interview: Michael Moorer. Also: Matthew Hilton, Molina-Suarez, Foreman-Cooney, Camacho-Paz.

July 1990: *KO* Interview—Sugar Ray Leonard. Color Pinup: Jorge Paez. Also: Michael Nunn, Buster Douglas, Jibaro Perez, the Olympians.

Aug. 1990: Meldrick Taylor: Brilliance In Defeat. Color Pinup: Buster Douglas. Interview: Teddy Atlas. Also: Buddy McGirt, Dokes-Ruddock, Simon Brown.

Sept. 1990: *KO* Interview—Buster Douglas. Color Pinup: Macho Camacho. Also: Thomas Hearns, Nigel Benn, Greg Haugen, Boxing Hall of Fame.

Oct. 1990: Send In The Clown: Is Jorge Paez A Phenom Or A Fraud? Color Pinup: Paul Banke. Interview: Tony Lopez. Also: Chavez-Taylor II, Jesse Benavides.

Nov. 1990: The Comeback Of Mike Tyson: A Crooked Course Straight To The Top. Color Pinup: Tony Lopez. Interview: Don Dunphy. Also: Davis-Breland, Riddick Bowe, federal commission.

Dec. 1990: The Heart Of The Matter: Who Will Survive The Holyfield-Douglas War? Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Michael Carbajal, Ruelas Brothers, best fighter poll.

Jan. 1991: Macho Ado About Nothing? Why Hector Camacho Wants To Be Believed. Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Irving Rudd. Also: Sugar Ray Leonard, Orlando Canizales, Vinny Pazienza.

Feb. 1991: 10 Fighters To Fear: Boxing's Most Destructive Hitters. Color Pinup: Razor Ruddock. Interview: Ray Mercer. Also: Roberto Duran, Saoul Mamby, Mills Lane, Sugar Ray Robinson.

May 1991: Ruddock Eyes The Big Upset Of Tyson. Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Jeff Fenech. Also: Virgil Hill, Pernell Whitaker, Alex Ramos, Simon Brown, Buddy McGirt.

June 1991: Exclusive *KO* Interview: Evander Holyfield. Color Pinup: Raul Perez. Also: Norris-Leonard, Charles Williams, champs of 1971 vs. 1991, J.C. Chavez.

July 1991: Riddick Bowe: Is He Destined To Be Heavyweight Champ? Color Pinup: Michael Carbajal. Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Bobby Czyz, Buster Douglas, Mark Breland.

Aug. 1991: Desert Storm II: Will The Tyson-Ruddock Rematch Be Different? Color Pinup: Loreto Garza. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Brown-Blocker, Fenech-Nelson preview, Harold Brazier, Yuh-Carbajal.

Sept. 1991: Remember Me? I Won The Fight! What "The Real Deal" Still Has To Deal With. Color Pinup: Ray Mercer. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Larry Holmes, southpaw heavyweights, Toney-Nunn, Brown-Taylor.

Oct. 1991: Thomas Hearns Works Another Miracle! Now There Are More Hills Left To Climb. Color Pinup: Humberto Gonzalez. Interview: Mike McCallum. Also: Norris-Curry, Richard Steele, Troy Dorsey.

Nov. 1991: Mike Tyson—The Only Heavyweight That Matters. Color Pinup: Thomas Hearns. Interview: Troy Dorsey. Also: Fenech-Nelson, James Toney, bodypunching.

Dec. 1991: Tyson vs. Holyfield—The Experts Analyze The Elements That Will Decide The Fight. Color Pinup: Joey Gamache. Also: Michael Moorer, Pernell Whitaker, Greg Richardson, Robert Quiroga.

Jan. 1992: The Tyson-Holyfield Showdown: An Exclusive Forecast By George Foreman. Color Pinup: Myung Woo Yuh. Also: Fenech-Nelson, TV announcers, boxing's toughest men, Toney-McCallum.

March 1992: *KO* Interview Mike Tyson: An In-Depth, Toe-To-Toe Talk With Boxing's Biggest Star. Color Pinup: Michael Moorer. Also: Thomas Hearns, Tracy Patterson, Larry Holmes, best fighter poll.

May 1992: Division-By-Division Faceoffs: The Best Of '92 vs. The Best Of '67. Color Pinup: James Warring. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Tommy Morrison, Bert Cooper, Gianfranco Rosi.

June 1992: If Not Tyson Or Holyfield, Then Who? Bowe? Moorer? Ruddock? Lewis? Mercer? Color Pinup: James Toney. Interview: Shelly Finkel. Also: Scotty Olson, overrated and underrated fighters, Orlin Norris, Whitaker-Pineda.

July 1992: The Title Reign of Evander Holyfield: A Reason To Hide ... Or A Reason For Pride? Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Julian Jackson. Also: Kelley-Dorsey, Nelson-Fenech, Kennedy McKinney.

Aug. 1992: Bowe Knows The Big Fight: The Top Contender Analyzes Holmes-Holyfield. Color Pinup: Julian Jackson. Interview: Michael Spinks. Also: Thomas Hearns, Blue Horizon, fighting fear, Toney-Barkley, Greg Haugen.

Sept. 1992: Can Tommy Morrison Punch Out The Theory ... White Men Can't Fight. Color Pinup: Welcome Ncita. Interview: Ken Norton. Also: Reggie Johnson, Jimmy Paul, McGirt-Blocker, Ali-Shavers.

Oct. 1992: The Olympics: Golden Memories ... And Golden Futures? Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Genaro Hernandez, Terry Norris.

Nov. 1992: Foreman vs. Holmes: The Fight Evander Holyfield Should Have Prevented. Color Pinup: Iran Barkley. Interview: Joey Gamache. Also: Hector Camacho, Tracy Patterson, Rudy Zavala.

Dec. 1992: The Final Four: Ruddock vs. Lewis, Holyfield vs. Bowe. Color Pinup: Genaro Hernandez. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: Whitaker-Pineda, Bowe-Coetzer, Alex Stewart, Gamache-Lopez.

Jan. 1993: Holyfield vs. Bowe: Who Will Win And Why. Color Pinup: Al Cole. Interview: Vinny Pazienza. Also: James Toney, Terrence Alli, Maurice Blocker.

Feb. 1993: Strictly Business: George Foreman Fights For The Love Of It—The Money! Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: George Benton. Also: Tracy Spann, Oba Carr, greatest eras.

March 1993: Not Just Another English Muffin: Lennox Lewis Powers His Way Toward The Title. Color Pinup: Leeonzer Barber. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Reggie Johnson, Lopez-Gamache, USA Network.

May 1993: Recapping The Future: Julio Cesar Chavez' Road To 100-0. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Junior Jones. Also: Buddy McGirt, Riddick Bowe, Raul Marquez.

Dec. 1993: The *KO* Feud Rages On: "I Will Torture You!" Says Riddick Bowe To Lennox Lewis. Color Pinup: Kennedy McKinney. Also: Mississippi boxing, George Foreman, Yori Boy Campas , Carbajal-Kim, Morrison-Moorer.

June 1995: The Tug-Of-War Over Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Wilfredo Vasquez. Interview: Oliver McCall. Also: Alejandro Gonzalez, Alexis Arguello, Kostya Tszyu.

June 1996: Destined For The Hall Of Fame: Who's In, Who's Out. Color Pinup: Wayne McCullough. Interview: Cedric Kushner. Also: Danny Romero, Mark Breland, Dynamite Dozen—the next 12.

Sept. 1996: Tyson vs. Seldon. Don't Bet On This Fight Until You've Read This Story! Color Pinup: Arturo Gatti. Interview: Butterbean. Also: Dana Rosenblatt, '92 Olympians, McGuigan-Pedroza.

Nov. 1996 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Roy Jones, Roberto Duran, Joe Cortez.

Dec. 1996: Andrew Golota—Taking The Low Road to Stardom. Color Pinup: Mark Johnson. Interview: Rock Newman. Also: De La Hoya-Gonzalez, Chuck Bodak, bizarre endings, Chavez-Rosario.

Winter 1996: This Is War! Holyfield-Tyson Will Be Explosive ... And Short. Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Also: Riddick Bowe, David Reid, Holyfield-Qawi.

Jan. 1997 (Special 88-Page Edition): Bowe-Golota II: Hatred And Vengeance ... It's A Beautiful Thing! Color Pinup: Johnny Tapia. Interview: Lou Duva. Also: Mouse Strauss, heavyweight rematches, Azumah Nelson.

Feb. 1997: *KO's* 1997 Wish List. Color Pinup: Ike Quartey. Interview: Naseem Hamed. Also: David Tua, Felix Trinidad, Adolpho Washington, Bobby Czyz.

March 1997: Holyfield's Trainer Tells All! An Inside Look At The Upset Of The Year. Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Also: George Foreman, Lupe Pintor, boxing bill, Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Aug. 1997: Oscar Reaches ... But Can't Grasp The Stars. Color Pinup: Nate Miller. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Norris-Trinidad preview, Hall of Fame, Angel Manfredy.

Sept. 1997: A Legitimate Grudge Match! Why Romero-Tapia Could Be The Fight Of The Year. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: David Tua. Also: Ike Quartey, George Foreman, top promoters.

Nov. 1997: Filling In The Missing Pieces: What "The Bite" Means To Boxing. Color Pinup: Christy Martin. Interview: Jim Lampley. Also: Vince Phillips, British prospects, Iran Barkley.

Dec. 1997: Johnny Tapia Outshines Danny Romero: The Defining Moment In A "Crazy Life." Color Pinup: Genaro Hernandez. Interview: Frans Botha. Also: Lewis-Akiwande, Don King, Charles Brewer.

Holiday 1997 (Special 88-Page Edition): Holyfield-Moorer II: Can Evander Avenge His Ugliest Defeat? Color Pinup: Vince Phillips. Interview: Mills Lane. Also: Roy Jones, Baby Jake Matlala, Boxing 2000.

Jan. 1998: De La Hoya Humbles The Macho Man: "Oscar's The Best I've Ever Fought." Color Pinup: William Guthrie. Interview: Mark Johnson. Also: Johnny Tapia, Pinklon Thomas, defense.

Feb. 1998: Is Lennox Lewis The World's Best Heavyweight? Color Pinup: Charles Brewer. Interview: Marc Ratner. Also: Otis Grant, Arturo Gatti.

March 1998: Evander Holyfield: For The Real Deal, Lewis Is No Big Deal. Color Pinup: Lou Del Valle. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: David Izon, Meldrick Taylor, rapid weight loss.

May 1998: Living Up To The Hype: Sometimes They Do ... Sometimes They Don't. Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Best Of ... (Part III). Also: Naseem Hamed, Marty Denkin, women's boxing.

June 1998: Lewis vs. Holyfield: Why The Fight Of The Year Isn't Going To Happen. Color Pinup: Evander Holyfield. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Hector Lizarraga, pain, Head-To-Head review.

Aug. 1998: Lewis Bombs Out Briggs: Would The WBC Champ Do This To Holyfield? Color Pinup: Keith Mullings. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Pernell Whitaker, Marco Antonio Barrera, Roberto Garcia.

Sept. 1998: Can Mike Tyson Make A Successful Comeback? Sugar Ray Leonard Has The Answer. Color Pinup: Michael Grant. Interview: Brad Jacobs. Also: Naseem Hamed, Wayne McCullough, Kirk Johnson.

Oct. 1998: The Ultimate Fantasy Card. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: Roy Jones. Also: Brendan Ingle, NYPD boxing, prospect blueprint.

Nov. 1998 The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Tim Austin. Also: Cesar Bazan, Spencer Oliver, Bobby Czyz.

Dec. 1998: Winning Fights Is Easier Than Winning Fans: Why Can't We Appreciate Roy Jones? Color Pinup: Tim Austin. Interview: Michael Grant. Also: Christy Martin, Ali Reform Act, one-hit wonders.

Holiday 1998: Toe-To-Toe With The Top 10: Where Does Tyson Fit In? Color Pinup: Shane Mosley. Inteview: Larry Hazzard. Also: Evander Holyfield, junior middleweights.

Jan. 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): Oscar Eliminates Chavez ... Now The Real Fights Begin! Color Pinup: Yory Boy Campas. Interview: William Joppy. Also: Mark Johnson, U.S.A. vs. the world.

Feb. 1999: Holyfield & Lewis: Did They Hurt Themselves Before They Could Hurt Each Other? Color Pinup: Andrew Golota. Interview: Angel Manfredy. Also: Mismatches, Bobby Czyz on watching fights.

March 1999: Exposed! Is Hamed Really Hector Camacho In Disguise? Color Pinup: Mike Tyson. Interview: Joe Frazier. Also: Zab Judah, Vuyani Bungu, Frankie Randall.

May 1999: The Tyson Of Old ... Or Just An Old Tyson? Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Fernando Vargas. Also: Antonio Diaz, Sumya Anani, standing eight-count.

June 1999: Will Tyson's Jail Time Be A Career Killer? Color Pinup: Johnny Tapia. Interview: Floyd Mayweather. Also: Roy Jones, 1999 Hall of Fame.

July 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): De La Hoya vs. Trinidad: The Fight The Public Demands ... But Is It Going To Happen? Color Pinup: David Tua. Interview: Tommy Brooks. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Tony Marshall, best of the century.

Aug. 1999: Lewis vs. Holyfield II: Should We Expect Anything Different Next Time? Color Pinup: Fernando Vargas. Interview: David Reid. Also: Ibeabuchi-Byrd, Melissa Salamone.

Sept. 1999: Mayweather vs. Mosley: Who's The Future Of Boxing? Color Pinup: James Page. Interview: J Russell Peltz. Also: Evander Holyfield, Thomas Hearns, Angel Manfredy.

Oct. 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Felix Trinidad. Interview: Jake LaMotta. Also: Tony Ayala, Erik Morales, Junior Jones.

Nov. 1999: De La Hoya vs. Trinidad: "It's Gonna Come Down To Who The Hell Wants It Most!" Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Arturo Gatti. Also: Roy Jones, Sugar Shane Mosley, Vassily Jirov.

Dec. 1999: David Reid & Fernando Vargas: Olympic Teammates On A Collision Course! Color Pinup: Zab Judah. Interview: Ike Ibeabuchi. Also: Vitali Klitschko, Antonio Tarver, Mike Tyson.

Holiday 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): Lewis-Holyfield II: Why We Demand A Knockout! Color Pinup: Sharmba Mitchell. Interview: Paulie Ayala. Also: James Toney, James Page & Terronn Millett, decade review.

Jan. 2000: Fool's Gold? Trinidad May Have Tarnished Oscar's Image Forever! Color Pinup: Paulie Ayala. Interview: Tony Ayala Jr. Also: David Reid, Johnny Nelson.

Feb. 2000: Breakout 2000: Who's Going To Lead The Way In Y2K? Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Shane Mosley, Wise-Chavez, Iran Barkley.

March 2000: Mike Tyson: "I'm Tired Of This Crap!" So Are We, Mike! Color Pinup: Vernon Forrest. Interview: James Page. Also: Erik Morales & Naseem Hamed, Diego Corrales, women's boxing.

May 2000: Michael Grant vs. Lennox Lewis—25 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Paul Spadafora. Interview: Dan Goossen. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Johnny Tapia, southpaws.

June 2000: Lewis vs. Grant: Who Will Win ... And Why. Color Pinup: Vitali Klitschko. Interview: Sharmba Mitchell. Also: Shane Mosley, David Izon, 2000 Hall of Fame.

July 2000: Today's Fighters, Tomorrow's Hall Of Famers. Color Pinup: Keith Holmes. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Zab Judah, Morales-Barrera, Wayne Braithwaite.

Aug. 2000: Mosley Prepares For Oscar: "It Will Be Like The First Round Of Hagler-Hearns." Color Pinup: Steve Johnston. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Vargas-Quartey, Thomas Hearns, Felix Trinidad, common sense vs. cowardice.

Sept. 2000: Now Vargas Is Ready For Trinidad & De La Hoya. Color Pinup: Erik Morales. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Trinidad vs. all-time greats, Thomas Hearns, common sense vs. cowardice.

Oct. 2000 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Floyd Mayweather. Interview: Stevie Johnston. Also: Clifford Etienne, overhyped heavyweights.

Nov. 2000: Sugar Rush! Mosley Achieves Superstardom At Oscar's Expense. Color Pinup: Lennox Lewis. Interview: Jay Larkin. Also: David Tua, Oleg Maskaev, Ben Tackie.

Dec. 2000: Mike Tyson vs. Lennox Lewis: 15 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Shane Mosley. Interview: Frank Maloney. Also: Oscar De La Hoya, Bronco McKart, our heroes' heroes.

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Feb. 2001: Fernando Vargas' Internal Battle: If He Can't Win It, He Can't Beat Trinidad. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Also: Derrick Gainer, Roy Jones, Naseem Hamed.

April 2001: Lewis Is Too Much For Tua ... But Could Tyson Do Any Better? Interview: Max Kellerman. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Wladimir Klitschko.

June 2001: Trinidad-Jones: Superfight Or Mismatch? Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Mayweather-Corrales, Paul Ingle, Davey Hilton, Tyson's relationship with Vargas, Judah, and Mayweather.

Aug. 2001: Sugar Shane Mosley: Too Sweet For The Bad Boy Era? Interview: Richard Steele. Also: Evander Holyfield, Roy Jones, Jesus Chavez.

Oct. 2001: Tito Power—From Fans To Foes ... Everyone's Feeling It! Interview: Lou DiBella. Also: Hasim Rahman, Vargas-Rivera, F.I.S.T.

Dec. 2001: Laila Ali: The Fighter, The Sex Symbol ... The Future Of Women's Boxing? Interview: Laila Ali. Also: Oscar De La Hoya, Tim Austin, Manny Pacquiao, Hector Camacho Jr.

Feb. 2002: Bernard Hopkins: "I Am The American Dream. I Am The American Story." Interview: Wladimir Klitschko. Also: Omar Sheika, Vernon Forrest, Juan Lazcano.

April 2002: After Hitting Rock Bottom ... Lennox Is Back On The Path To Greatness. Interview: Duva Boxing. Also: Zab Judah, Mike Tyson, Thomas Tate.

June 2002: Tyson vs. Lewis: 10-Page Preview & Analysis. Interview: Jameel McCline. Also: *Ali* movie, Dorin vs. Balbi & Ward vs. Leija.

Aug. 2002: Still Crazy After All These Years: Should Mike Tyson Be Allowed To Fight? Interview: Kostya Tszyu. Also: Barrera-Morales II preview, Ayala-Adams, Ricky Hatton.

Oct. 2002: Vernon Forrest vs. Shane Mosley: Two Careers On The Line! Interview: Fernando Vargas. Also: Mayweather-Castillo, Hopkins vs. all-time greats, heavyweight scrap heap.

Dec. 2002: Wladimir Klitschko: Would He Be Too Much For Lennox? Interview: Joe Calzaghe. Also: Barrera-Morales II, Evander Holyfield, Freddie Roach.

Winter 2002: A Realistic Look At Tyson's Comeback: He Can't Make History, But He Can Make Millions. Interview: Micky Ward. Also: Antonio Tarver, Antwun Echols, Acelino Freitas.

March 2003: Oscar De La Hoya—The War That Rages Within. Interview: Klitschko brothers. Also: Kassim Ouma, Eric Morel, holiday gifts.

May 2003: Danger Zone! Will Roy Jones Be Doomed By His Heavyweight Ego? Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Gatti-Ward II, Floyd Mayweather, Erik Morales.

July 2003: Boxing's Biggest X-Factor: Can Hopkins Recover From His Self-Inflicted Wounds? Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Kostya Tszyu, DaVarryl Williamson, 10 best defensive fighters.

Sept. 2003: Sugar Roy? How Jones Rates With The All-Time Greats. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Corrie Sanders, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Kermit Cintron.

Nov. 2003: De La Hoya-Mosley II: Will Three Years And Seven Pounds Make A Difference? Interview: James Toney. Also: Michael Watson, Erik Morales, Jones-Holyfield head-to-head.

Winter 2003: *KO* Interview Arturo Gatti: "Kostya Tszyu Needs Me More Than I Need Him." Also: Mayorga-Forrest II, Zab Judah, Corrales-Casamayor preview, Joe Calzaghe.

Feb. 2004: Shane Mosley: A Second Chance At Superstardom. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Also: Laila Ali, Scott LeDoux, retirement.

April 2004: Human After All: Tarver Makes Jones Turn To Tyson. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Sharmba Mitchell, Toney-McCline preview, trash-talking.

June 2004: What Could Tyson Do To Jones? Also: Interview: Antonio Tarver. Also: Bernard Hopkins, Spinks-Mayorga.

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☐ OCT/83	☐ AUG/88	☐ MAY/92	☐ AUG/98	☐ DEC/00
☐ JUL/84	☐ SEP/88	☐ JUN/92	☐ SEP/98	☐ FEB/01
☐ AUG/84	☐ OCT/88	☐ JUL/92	☐ NOV/98	☐ APR/01
☐ OCT/84	☐ DEC/88	☐ AUG/92	☐ DEC/98	☐ JUN/01
☐ NOV/84	☐ JAN/89	☐ SEP/92	☐ HOL/98	☐ AUG/01
☐ FEB/85	☐ FEB/89	☐ OCT/92	☐ JAN/99	☐ OCT/01
☐ MAR/85	☐ AUG/89	☐ NOV/92	☐ FEB/99	☐ DEC/01
☐ MAY/85	☐ SEP/89	☐ DEC/92	☐ MAR/99	☐ FEB/02
☐ JUL/85	☐ FEB/90	☐ JAN/93	☐ MAY/99	☐ APR/02
☐ AUG/85	☐ JUN/90	☐ FEB/93	☐ JUN/99	☐ JUN/02
☐ OCT/85	☐ JUL/90	☐ MAR/93	☐ JUL/99	☐ AUG/02
☐ NOV/85	☐ AUG/90	☐ MAY/93	☐ AUG/99	☐ OCT/02
☐ DEC/85	☐ SEP/90	☐ JUN/95	☐ SEP/99	☐ DEC/02
☐ JAN/86	☐ OCT/90	☐ JUN/96	☐ OCT/99	☐ WIN/02
☐ FEB/86	☐ NOV/90	☐ SEP/96	☐ NOV/99	☐ MAR/03
☐ JUL/86	☐ DEC/90	☐ NOV/96	☐ DEC/99	☐ MAY/03
☐ OCT/86	☐ JAN/91	☐ DEC/96	☐ HOL/99	☐ JUL/03
☐ DEC/86	☐ FEB/91	☐ WIN/96	☐ JAN/00	☐ SEP/03
☐ FEB/87	☐ MAY/91	☐ JAN/97	☐ FEB/00	☐ NOV/03
☐ JUN/87	☐ JUN/91	☐ MAR/97	☐ MAR/00	☐ WIN/03
☐ AUG/87	☐ JUL/91	☐ AUG/97	☐ MAY/00	☐ FEB/04
☐ OCT/87	☐ AUG/91	☐ DEC/97	☐ JUN/00	☐ APR/04
☐ NOV/87	☐ SEP/91	☐ HOL/97	☐ JUL/00	☐ JUN/04
☐ DEC/87	☐ OCT/91	☐ JAN/98	☐ AUG/00	
☐ JAN/88	☐ NOV/91	☐ FEB/98	☐ SEP/00	
☐ FEB/88	☐ DEC/91	☐ MAR/98		

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ALPHABET RATINGS

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS

(Ratings as of May 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: John Ruiz (USA)

1. Hasim Rahman (USA)
2. Joe Mesi (USA)
3. James Toney (USA)
4. Lance Whitaker (USA)
5. Andrew Golota (POL)
6. Jameel McCline (USA)
7. Owen Beck (JAM)
8. Monte Barrett (USA)
9. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
10. Mike Tyson (USA)
11. Nicolay Valuev (RUS)
12. Evander Holyfield (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)

1. Valery Brudov (RUS)
2. Virgil Hill (USA)
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
5. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
6. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
7. Guillermo Jones (PAN)
8. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
9. Dale Brown (CAN)
10. Luis Pineda (PAN)
11. Pavel Melkomian (ARM)
12. Rudiger May (GER)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Antonio Tarver (USA)

Champ: Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)

1. Dariusz Michalczewski (GER)
2. Roy Jones (USA)
3. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
4. Silvio Branco (ITA)
5. George Jones (USA)
6. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
7. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
8. Lou Del Valle (USA)
9. Stipe Drews (CRO)
10. Danny Batchelder (USA)
11. Bruno Girard (FRA)
12. Paul Murdoch (AUSTRL)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Manuel Siaca (PR)

1. Mads Larsen (DEN)
2. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
3. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
4. Jeff Lacy (USA)
5. Antwun Echols (USA)
6. Byron Mitchell (USA)
7. Brian Magee (GB)
8. Danilo Haussler (GER)
9. Nordin Ben-Salah (NETH)
10. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
11. Charles Brewer (USA)
12. Jackson Chanet (FRA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)

Champ: Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)

1. Bert Schenk (GER)
2. Felix Trinidad (PR)
3. Jermain Taylor (USA)
4. Kingsley Ikeke (NIG)
5. Howard Eastman (GB)
6. Robert Allen (USA)
7. William Joppy (USA)
8. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
9. Kelly Pavlik (USA)
10. Raymond Joval (NETH)
11. Quentin Smith (USA)
12. Evans Ashira (DEN)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Winky Wright (USA)

Champ: Travis Simms (USA)

1. Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
2. Fernando Vargas (USA)
3. Kassim Ouma (GHA)
4. Shane Mosley (USA)
5. Alejandro Garcia (MEX)
6. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
7. Vernon Forrest (USA)
8. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
9. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
10. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
11. J.C. Candelo (COL)
12. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)

WELTERWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)

Champ: Jose Rivera (USA)

1. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
2. Kermit Cintron (PR)
3. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
4. Michael Trabant (GER)
5. Farhad Bakirov (UZB)
6. Teddy Reid (USA)
7. Chris Smith (USA)
8. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
9. Ishe Smith (USA)
10. Carlos Quintana (PR)
11. Mustapha Bouzid (FRA)
12. Sebastian Ljuan (ARG)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)

Champ: Vivian Harris (GUY)

1. Miguel Cotto (PR)
2. Floyd Mayweather (USA)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
5. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
6. Andreas Kotelnik (GER)
7. Carlos Maussa (COL)
8. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
9. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
10. Souleyman M'Baye (FRA)
11. Kelson Pinto (BRA)
12. Masakazu Satake (JAP)

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Champ: Lakva Sim (MON)

1. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
2. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
3. Michael Clark (USA)
4. Courtney Burton (USA)
5. Juan Lazcano (USA)
6. Isaac Hlatshwayo (SA)
7. Juan Diaz (USA)
8. Antonio Pitalua (COL)
9. Miguel Callist (PAN)
10. Billy Irwin (CAN)
11. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
12. Artur Grigorian (UZB)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS

Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)

1. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
2. Mzonke Fana (SA)
3. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
4. Janos Nagy (HUN)
5. Michael Gomez (GB)
6. Nobuhito Honmo (JAP)
7. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
8. Mike Anchondo (USA)
9. Vicente Mosquera (PAN)
10. Randy Suico (PHIL)
11. Pongsith Wianwiset (THAI)
12. Jose Miguel Cotto (PR)

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)

Champ: Chris John (INDO)

1. Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)
2. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
3. Derrick Gainer (USA)
4. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
5. Spend Abazi (DEN)
6. Victor Polo (COL)
7. Oscar Leon (COL)
8. Orlando Salido (MEX)
9. Michael Brodie (GB)
10. Zahir Raheem (USA)
11. Osamu Sato (JAP)
12. Rocky Juarez (USA)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)

1. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
2. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
3. Tim Austin (USA)
4. Yober Ortega (VEN)
5. Paulie Ayala (USA)
6. Ricardo Cordova (PAN)
7. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
8. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
9. Shoji Kimura (JAP)
10. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
11. Jorge Linares (VEN)
12. Daniel Ponce-DeLeon (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)

1. Julio Zarate (MEX)
2. Poongsawat Krachingdaen (THAI)
3. Diego Morales (MEX)
4. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
5. Wladimir Sidorenko (UKR)
6. Jun Toriumi (JAP)
7. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
8. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
9. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
10. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
11. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
12. Leo Gamez (VEN)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)

1. Martin Castillo (MEX)
2. Eric Morel (USA)
3. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
4. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
5. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
6. Jose Navarro (USA)
7. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
8. Luis Bolano (COL)
9. Felix Machado (VEN)
10. Reynaldo Lopez Brown (COL)
11. Cesar Lopez (USA)
12. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)

FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Lorenzo Parra (VEN)

1. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
2. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
3. Brian Viloria (USA)
4. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
5. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
6. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
7. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
8. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
9. Cyril Bellanger (FRA)
10. Angel Priolo (COL)
11. Damaen Kelly (GB)
12. Cristian Mijares (MEX)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)

1. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
2. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
3. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
4. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
5. Vicky Tamul (IND)
6. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
7. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
8. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)
9. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
10. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
11. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
12. Ulises Solis (MEX)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS

Champ: Noel Arambulet (VEN)

1. Juan Landaeta (VEN)
2. Heriberto Gejon (PHIL)
3. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
4. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
5. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
6. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
7. Pornsawan Pramuk (THAI)
8. Yutaka Niida (JAP)
9. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
10. Junichiro Kaneda (JAP)
11. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
12. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)

WBC RATINGS

(Ratings as of April 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Vitali Klitschko (UKR)

1. Joe Mesi (USA)
2. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
3. James Toney (USA)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. Henry Akinwande (NIG)
6. Jameel McCline (USA)
7. David Tua (NZ)
8. Mike Tyson (USA)
9. Monte Barrett (USA)
10. DaVarryl Williamson (USA)
11. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
12. Owen Beck (JAM)
13. Oleg Maskaev (UZB)
14. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
15. Eliecer Castillo (CUB)
16. Faruq Saleem (USA)
17. Dominick Guinn (USA)
18. Lance Whitaker (USA)
19. Derrick Jefferson (USA)
20. Luan Krasniqi (GER)
21. Dennis Bakhtov (KAZ)
22. Timo Hoffman (GER)
23. Jeremy Williams (USA)
24. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
25. Sinan Samil San (TUR)
26. Matt Skelton (GB)
27. Kevin McBride (IRE)
28. Samuel Peter (NIG)
29. Peter Okhello (UGA)
30. Nicolay Valouev (RUS)

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Champ: Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)

1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
3. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
4. Rydell Booker (USA)
5. Rudiger May (GER)
6. Dale Brown (CAN)
7. Pavel Melkomian (RUS)
8. Krysztov Wlodarczyk (POL)
9. Carl Thompson (GB)
10. Glen Kelly (AUSTRL)
11. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
12. Virgil Hill (USA)
13. Imamu Mayfield (USA)
14. Vincenzo Rossitto (ITA)
15. Valery Brudov (RUS)
16. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
17. Sebastiaan Rothman (SA)
18. Richard LaMontagne (USA)
19. Louis Azille (DR)
20. Felix Cora (USA)
21. Baldwin Hlongwane (SA)
22. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
23. Alexander Petkovic (GER)
24. Mark Hobson (GB)
25. Michael Simms (USA)
26. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
27. Mauro Ordiales (ARG)
28. Enzo Maccarinelli (GB)
29. Jorge Kahwagi (MEX)
30. James Elizalde (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Roy Jones (USA)

1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
3. Stipe Drews (CRO)
4. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
5. Dariusz Michalczewski (GER)
6. Jesus Ruiz (MEX)
7. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
8. Elvir Muriqi (ALB)
9. Rico Hoye (USA)
10. Julio Gonzalez (MEX)
11. George Jones (USA)
12. Dan Batchelder (USA)
13. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
14. Matthew Barney (GB)
15. Jorge Castro (ARG)
16. Orlando Rivera (PR)
17. Lou Del Valle (USA)
18. Daniel Judah (USA)
19. Laudelino Barros (BRA)
20. Silvio Branco (ITA)
21. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
22. Peter Oboh (GB)
23. Sergey Karanevich (RUS)
24. Adrian Diaconu (CAN)
25. Donnell Wiggins (USA)
26. Julian Letterlough (USA)
27. Troy Weaver (USA)
28. Hugo Garay (ARG)
29. Allan Green (USA)
30. Andrew Lowe (GB)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Markus Beyer (GER)

Interim Champ: Danny Green (AUSTRL)

1. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
2. Eric Lucas (CAN)
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. Jeff Lacy (USA)
6. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
7. Brian Magee (GB)
8. Scott Pemberton (USA)
9. Charles Brewer (USA)
10. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
11. Kabary Salem (EGY)
12. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
13. Otis Grant (CAN)
14. Robin Reid (GB)
15. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
16. Antwun Echols (USA)
17. Henry Porras (CR)
18. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
19. Enrique Ornelas (USA)
20. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
21. Robert Stieglitz (GER)
22. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)
23. Andre Thysse (SA)
24. Librado Andrade (USA)
25. Willie Stewart (USA)
26. Victor Oganov (RUS)
27. Carmine Tufano (USA)
28. Vitaly Tsypko (UKR)
29. Jackson Chanet (FRA)
30. David Lopez (MEX)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)

1. Howard Eastman (GB)
2. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
3. Jermain Taylor (USA)
4. Keith Holmes (USA)
5. Kingsley Ikeke (CAN)
6. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
7. Robert Allen (USA)
8. Raymond Joval (HOL)
9. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
10. Quentin Smith (USA)
11. Sergey Tatevosyan (RUS)
12. Eric Mitchell (USA)
13. Epifanio Mendoza (COL)
14. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
15. Bert Schenk (GER)
16. Mariano Carrera (ARG)
17. Evans Ashira (KEN)
18. Kelly Pavlik (USA)
19. Yoshihiro Araki (JAP)
20. Leonard Pierre Anastan (HAI)
21. Willie Gibbs (USA)
22. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
23. Daniel Edouard (USA)
24. Chad Dawson (USA)
25. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
26. Alexey Chirkov (RUS)
27. James Obedi Toney (GHA)
28. Tokutaro Toyozumi (JAP)
29. Jesse Brinkley (USA)
30. Troy Rowland (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Winky Wright (USA)

Interim Champ: Javier Castillejo (SPA)

1. Fernando Vargas (USA)
2. Shane Mosley (USA)
3. Kassim Ouma (USA)
4. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
5. Marco Antonio Rubio (MEX)
6. Sergei Dzindziruk (UKR)
7. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
8. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
9. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
10. Alex Bunema (USA)
11. J.C. Candelo (COL)
12. Tokunbo Olajide (CAN)
13. Toshiharu Kaneyama (JAP)
14. Raul Marquez (USA)
15. Aslan Kodzoev (RUS)
16. Jamie Moore (GB)
17. Rodney Jones (USA)
18. Nobuhiro Ishida (JAP)
19. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
20. Verno Phillips (USA)
21. Alejandro Garcia (MEX)
22. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
23. Nurhan Suleymanoglu (TUR)
24. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
25. Christophe Canclaux (FRA)
26. Richard Williams (GB)
27. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
28. Joachim Alcine (CAN)
29. Jose Luis Zertuche (MEX)
30. Jimmy Colas (FRA)

WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)

1. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
2. Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
3. Vernon Forrest (USA)
4. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
5. Miguel Rodriguez (MEX)
6. Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)
7. Ishe Smith (USA)
8. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
9. Christophe Henry (BAR)
10. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
11. Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)
12. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
13. Alpaslan Aguzum (TUR)
14. Teddy Reid (USA)
15. Kermit Cintron (USA)
16. Frederic Klose (FRA)
17. Michel Trabant (GER)
18. Sebastian Lujan (ARG)
19. Rafael Pineda (COL)
20. Joseph Makaringe (SA)
21. Farkhad Bakirov (UZB)
22. Michele Orlando (ITA)
23. Hiroshi Watanabe (JAP)
24. Randall Bailey (USA)
25. Hiroyuki Maeda (JAP)
26. James Hare (GB)
27. Chris Smith (USA)
28. Joshua Clottey (GHA)
29. Carlos Quintana (PR)
30. Raul Bejarano (ARG)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS

Emeritus Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)

Champ: Arturo Gatti (CAN)

1. Leonard Dorin (CAN)
2. Miguel Cotto (PR)
3. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
4. Paul Spadafora (USA)
5. Ricky Hatton (GB)
6. James Leija (USA)
7. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
8. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
9. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
10. Kelson Pinto (BRA)
11. Carlos Maussa (COL)
12. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
13. DeMarcus Corley (USA)

14. Juan Urango (COL)
15. Lovemore Ndou (SA)
16. Junior Witter (GB)
17. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)
18. Victor Kpadenue (GHA)
19. Juan Carlos Rodriguez (MEX)
20. Alvaro Aguilar (MEX)
21. Jungbum Kim (KOR)
22. Eloy Rojas (VEN)
23. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR)
24. Jose Areli Lopez (MEX)
25. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
26. Norio Kimura (JAP)
27. Andreas Kotelnik (UKR)
28. Muhammad Abdullaev (UZB)
29. Salvatore Battaglia (ITA)
30. Jorge Rodriguez (MEX)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)
1. Juan Lazcano (USA)
2. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
3. Juan Diaz (MEX)
4. Phillip Ndou (SA)
5. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
6. Steve Johnston (USA)
7. Julio Diaz (USA)
8. Michael Clark (USA)
9. Jason Cook (GB)
10. Yuri Romanov (UKR)
11. Matt Zegan (POL)
12. Victoriano Sosa (DR)
13. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
14. Michele Delli Paoli (ITA)
15. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
16. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
17. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
18. Antonio Pitaltua (COL)
19. Aldo Rios (ARG)
20. Takehiro Shimada (JAP)
21. Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
22. Eleazar Contreras (USA)
23. Artur Grigorian (UZB)
24. David Burke (GB)
25. Graham Earl (GB)
26. Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)
27. Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)
28. Ricardo Silva (ARG)
29. Billy Irwin (CAN)
30. Rolando Reyes (USA)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)
1. Mzonke Fana (SA)
2. Randy Suico (PHIL)
3. Jesus Chavez (USA)
4. Zahir Raheem (USA)
5. Mike Anchondo (USA)
6. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
7. Nobuto Honmo (JAP)
8. Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
9. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
10. Janos Nagy (HUN)
11. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
12. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
13. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
14. Orlando Salido (MEX)
15. Goyo Vargas (MEX)
16. Miguel Angel Huerta (MEX)
17. Edwin Valero (VEN)
18. Valdemir Pereira (BRA)
19. Steve Luevano (USA)
20. Julio Garcia (MEX)
21. Daniel Dominguez (MEX)
22. Nate Campbell (USA)
23. Michael Gomez (GB)
24. Jose Cotto (PR)
25. Craig Docherty (GB)
26. Leonardo Resendiz (MEX)
27. Koba Gogaladze (GEO)
28. Alex Arthur (GB)
29. Bobby Pacquiao (PHIL)
30. Aldo Valtierra (MEX)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Injin Chi (KOR)
1. Rocky Juarez (USA)
2. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
3. Humberto Soto (MEX)
4. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
5. Michael Brodie (GB)
6. Nicky Cook (GB)
7. Spend Abazi (DEN)
8. Juan Carlos Ramirez (MEX)
9. William Abelyan (USA)
10. Guty Espadas (MEX)
11. Hector Velazquez (MEX)
12. Eiichi Sugama (JAP)
13. Frankie Archuleta (USA)
14. Derrick Gainer (USA)
15. Luis Fuente (MEX)
16. Osamu Sato (JAP)
17. Jorge Solis (MEX)
18. Willie Jorrin (USA)
19. Vuyani Bungu (SA)
20. Daniel Maldonado (USA)
21. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
22. Gamaliel Diaz (MEX)
23. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
24. Osamanu Akaba (GHA)
25. Tommy Browne (AUSTRL)
26. Whyber Garcia (PAN)
27. Dainoshin Kuma (JAP)
28. Carlos Gamez (MEX)
29. Jorge Monzon (MEX)
30. Cornelius Lock (USA)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar Larios (MEX)
1. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
2. Napapol Kiattisakchocchoi (THAI)
3. Yoshikane Nakajima (JAP)
4. Daniel Ponce (MEX)
5. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
6. Shigeru Nakazato (JAP)
7. Jimrex Jaca (PHIL)
8. Paulie Ayala (USA)
9. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
10. Jorge Linares (VEN)
11. Seungsok Chae (KOR)
12. Hector Julio Avila (DR)
13. Jose Rojas (VEN)
14. Art Simonyan (USA)
15. Fernando Beltran Jr. (MEX)
16. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
17. Esham Pickering (GB)
18. Adolfo Landeros (MEX)
19. Antonio Meza (MEX)
20. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
21. Cuauhtemoc Vargas (MEX)
22. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
23. Eduardo Garcia (MEX)
24. Sergio Medina (ARG)
25. Ricardo Castillo (MEX)
26. Sammy Ventura (MEX)
27. Michael Hunter (GB)
28. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
29. Yuta Nagai (JAP)
30. Armando Guerrero (USA)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)
1. Diego Morales (MEX)
2. Genaro Garcia (USA)
3. Adonis Rivas (NIC)
4. Hozumi Hasegawa (JAP)
5. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
6. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
7. Vusi Malinga (SA)
8. Jorge Lacierva (MEX)
9. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
10. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
11. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
12. David Guerault (FRA)
13. Noel Wilders (GB)
14. Gerardo Martinez (MEX)
15. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
16. Silence Mabuza (SA)
17. Franklin Theran (COL)
18. Khulile Makeba (SA)
19. Steve Molitor (CAN)
20. Julio Cesar Avila (MEX)
21. Francisco Mateos (MEX)
22. Wladimir Sidorenko (UKR)
23. Saenghiran Lookbanyai (THAI)
24. Jun Toriumi (JAP)
25. Sasha Baktin (RUS)
26. Miguel Angel Munguia (MEX)
27. Akihiko Nago (JAP)
28. Eduardo Escobedo (MEX)
29. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
30. Cesar Morales (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masamori Tokuyama (JAP)
1. Jose Navarro (USA)
2. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
3. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
4. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
5. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
6. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
7. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
8. Martin Castillo (MEX)
9. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
10. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
11. Joven Jorda (PHIL)
12. Luis Bolano (COL)
13. Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)
14. Gerson Guerrero (MEX)
15. Hugo Ramirez (MEX)
16. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
17. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
18. Cecilio Santos (MEX)
19. Seiji Tanaka (JAP)
20. Alex Becerra (USA)
21. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
22. Waenpetch Chuwatana (THAI)
23. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
24. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
25. Raul Juarez (MEX)
26. Jose Beranza (MEX)
27. Sergio Santillan (ARG)
28. Cyril Bellanger (FRA)
29. Karim Quibir (SPA)
30. Shin Ogata (JAP)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)
1. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
2. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
3. Noriyuki Komatsu (JAP)
4. Brian Viloria (USA)
5. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
6. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
7. Jair Jimenez (COL)
8. Eric Morel (PR)
9. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
10. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
11. Vic Darchinyan (AUSTRL)
12. Diosdado Gabi (PHIL)
13. Evert Briceno (NIC)
14. Angel Priolo (COL)
15. Masaki Nakanuma (JAP)
16. Koji Koyama (JAP)
17. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
18. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
19. Carlos Bouchan (MEX)
20. Raul Eliseo Medina (ARG)
21. Damaen Kelly (GB)
22. Christian Mijares (MEX)
23. Luis Angel Martinez (MEX)
24. Denburapa Ekarin (THAI)
25. Julio Ler (ARG)
26. Gabriel Elizondo (USA)
27. Steffen Norskov (DEN)
28. Jose Araiza (MEX)
29. Marcos Obregon (ARG)
30. Khunsuk Lukprabat (THAI)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jorge Arce (MEX)
1. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
2. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
3. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
4. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
5. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
6. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
7. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
8. Ulises Solis (MEX)
9. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
10. Luis Valdez (MEX)
11. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
12. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
13. Edgar Sosa (MEX)
14. Omar Nino (MEX)
15. Yosam Choi (KOR)
16. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
17. Monelisi Myekeni (SA)
18. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
19. Vicky Tahumil (INDO)
20. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
21. Andrea Sarritzu (ITA)
22. Hugo Cazares (MEX)
23. Carlos Fajardo (NIC)
24. Javier Lagos (MEX)
25. Juan Centeno (NIC)
26. Bert Batawang (PHIL)
27. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
28. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
29. Jose Lopez (PR)
30. Munetsugu Kayo (JAP)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Eagle Akakura (JAP)
1. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
2. Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
3. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
4. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
5. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
6. Mohamed Rachman (INDO)
7. Juan Palacios (NIC)
8. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
9. Oledong Sithsanerchai (THAI)
10. Armand de la Cruz (PHIL)
11. Lorenzo Trejo (MEX)
12. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
13. Francisco Rosas (MEX)
14. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
15. Pornsawan Porpramook (THAI)
16. Teruo Misawa (JAP)
17. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
18. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
19. Omar Soto (MEX)
20. Miguel Telliz (NIC)
21. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
22. Namchai Ratanachaigym (THAI)
23. Ricardo San Martin (MEX)
24. Gerardo Verde (MEX)
25. Iwan Key (INDO)
26. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
27. Nkosinathi Joyi (SA)
28. Shunsuke Nagao (JAP)
29. Valentin Leon (MEX)
30. Emilio Aguelican (MEX)

IBF RATINGS
(Ratings as of May 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Chris Byrd (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jameel McCline (USA)
4. James Toney (USA)
5. Hasim Rahman (USA)
6. Juan Carlos Gomez (USA)
7. Andrew Golota (USA)
8. Lance Whitaker (USA)
9. Joe Mesi (USA)
10. Vassiliy Jirov (USA)
11. Henry Akinwande (GB)
12. David Tua (NZ)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kelvin Davis (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
5. Luis Pineda (PAN)
6. Ezra Sellers (USA)
7. Ravea Springs (USA)
8. Guillermo Jones (PAN)
9. Carl Thompson (GB)
10. Vadim Tokarev (RUS)
11. Dale Brown (CAN)
12. Pietro Aurino (ITA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
1. Rico Hoye (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Montell Griffin (USA)
4. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
5. Clinton Woods (GB)
6. Richard Hall (USA)
7. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
8. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
9. Stipe Drews (CRO)
10. Dariusz Michalczewski (POL)
11. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
12. Robert Stieglitz (GER)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
2. Vacant
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Jeff Lacy (USA)
5. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
6. Danilo Haussler (GER)
7. Charles Brewer (USA)
8. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
9. Vitaly Tsypko (UKR)
10. Robin Reid (GB)
11. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
12. Antwun Echols (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Robert Allen (USA)
2. Raymond Joval (HOL)
3. Jermain Taylor (USA)
4. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
5. Bert Schenk (GER)
6. Howard Eastman (GB)
7. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
8. Derrell Coley (USA)
9. Kingsley Ikeke (USA)
10. Hector Velazco (ARG)
11. Kelly Pavlik (USA)
12. Ottavio Barone (ITA)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Kassim Ouma (USA)
2. Verno Phillips (USA)
3. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
4. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
5. J.C. Candelo (USA)
6. Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
7. Vernon Forrest (USA)
8. Fernando Vargas (USA)
9. Keith Holmes (USA)
10. Tokundo Olajide (USA)
11. Julio Garcia (USA)
12. Alejandro Garcia (MEX)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Teddy Reid (USA)
4. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
5. Kermit Cintron (USA)
6. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
7. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
8. Jose Celaya (USA)
9. Ishe Smith (USA)
10. Diobelys Hurtado (USA)
11. James Hare (ENG)
12. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Interim Champ: Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
1. Miguel Cotto (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Ricky Hatton (ENG)
4. Mike Stewart (USA)
5. Lovemore Ndou (AUSTRL)
6. James Leija (USA)
7. DeMarcus Corley (USA)
8. Paul Spadafora (USA)
9. Leonard Dorin (CAN)
10. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
11. Muhamad Abdullaev (USA)
12. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Julio Diaz (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Levander Johnson (USA)
4. Michael Clark (USA)
5. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
6. Courtney Burton (USA)
7. Artur Grigorian (UZB)
8. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
9. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
10. Steve Johnston (USA)
11. Craig Weber (USA)
12. Edner Cherry (USA)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Carlos Hernandez (USA)
1. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
2. Vacant
3. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
4. Steve Forbes
5. Joel Casamayor (USA)
6. Sirimongkol Singmanassak (THAI)
7. Nate Campbell (USA)
8. Janos Nagy (HUN)
9. Mike Anchondo (USA)
10. David Santos (USA)
11. Michael Gomez (IRE)
12. Phillip Ndou (SA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)
4. Orlando Salido (MEX)
5. Zahir Raheem (USA)
6. Rocky Juarez (USA)
7. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
8. Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym (THAI)
9. Derrick Gainer (USA)
10. Spend Abazi (DEN)
11. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
12. Humberto Soto (MEX)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Israel Vazquez (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Art Simonyan (USA)
4. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
5. Fahsung 3K Battery (THAI)
6. Paulie Ayala (USA)
7. David Donis (USA)
8. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
9. Agapito Sanchez (DR)
10. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
11. Diego Morales (MEX)
12. Bobby Boy Velardez (USA)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Rafael Marquez (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
3. Genaro Garcia (MEX)
4. David Guerault (FRA)
5. Pete Frissina (USA)
6. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
7. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
8. Jorge Lacierva (USA)
9. Mauricio Pastrana (PAN)
10. Daniel Ponce DeLeon (MEX)
11. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
12. Steve Molitor (CAN)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Luis Perez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jose Navarro (USA)
4. Luis Bolano (COL)
5. Felix Machado (VEN)
6. Eric Morel (USA)
7. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
8. Jason Booth (ENG)
9. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
10. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
11. Peter Culshaw (ENG)
12. Oscar Andrade (MEX)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)
1. Vic Darchinian (AUSTRL)
2. Vacant
3. Jair Jimenez (COL)
4. Damaen Kelly (GB)
5. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
6. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
7. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
8. Angel Priolo (COL)
9. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
10. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
11. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
12. Hawk Makepula (SA)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Burgos (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
4. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
5. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
6. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
7. Yosam Choi (KOR)
8. Tatsuo Hatashida (JAP)
9. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
10. Roberto Vasquez (PAN)
11. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
12. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Daniel Reyes (COL)
1. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
2. Vacant
3. Pichit Siriwat (THAI)
4. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
5. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
6. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
7. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
8. Jose Lopez (PR)
9. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
10. Eriberto Gejon (PHIL)
11. Omar Soto (MEX)
12. Juan Palacios (NIC)

CLASSIC

From THE RING, September 1939

DEMPSEY-FIRPO THRILLS DUPLICATED BY TONY

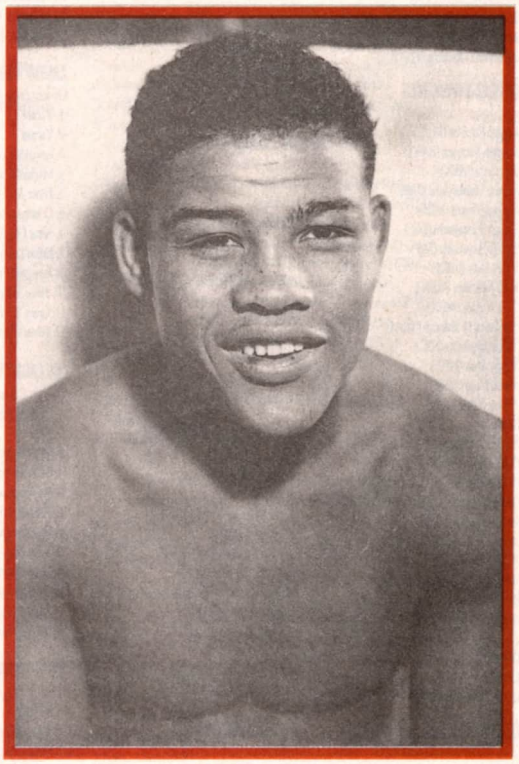
By Nat Fleischer

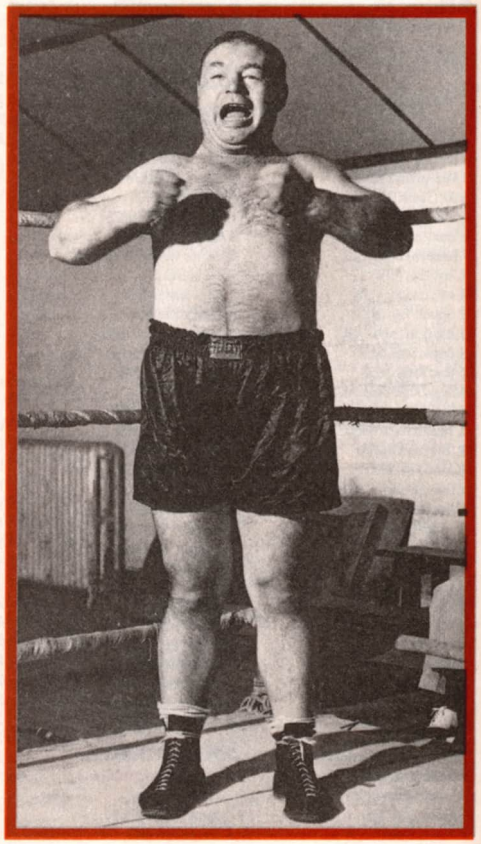
(Editor's Note: This is a condensed version.)

Like the historic battle between Luis Firpo and Jack Dempsey, which retains its place among the most talked of contests in the history of the heavyweight division, the bout between Joe Louis and Tony Galento goes into fistic history as one of the all-time thrillers. Contrary to expectation, the man who wasn't given a chance came through with one of the most courageous stands of recent years, to send 34,582 persons, who paid a total of $283,303, singing his praises.

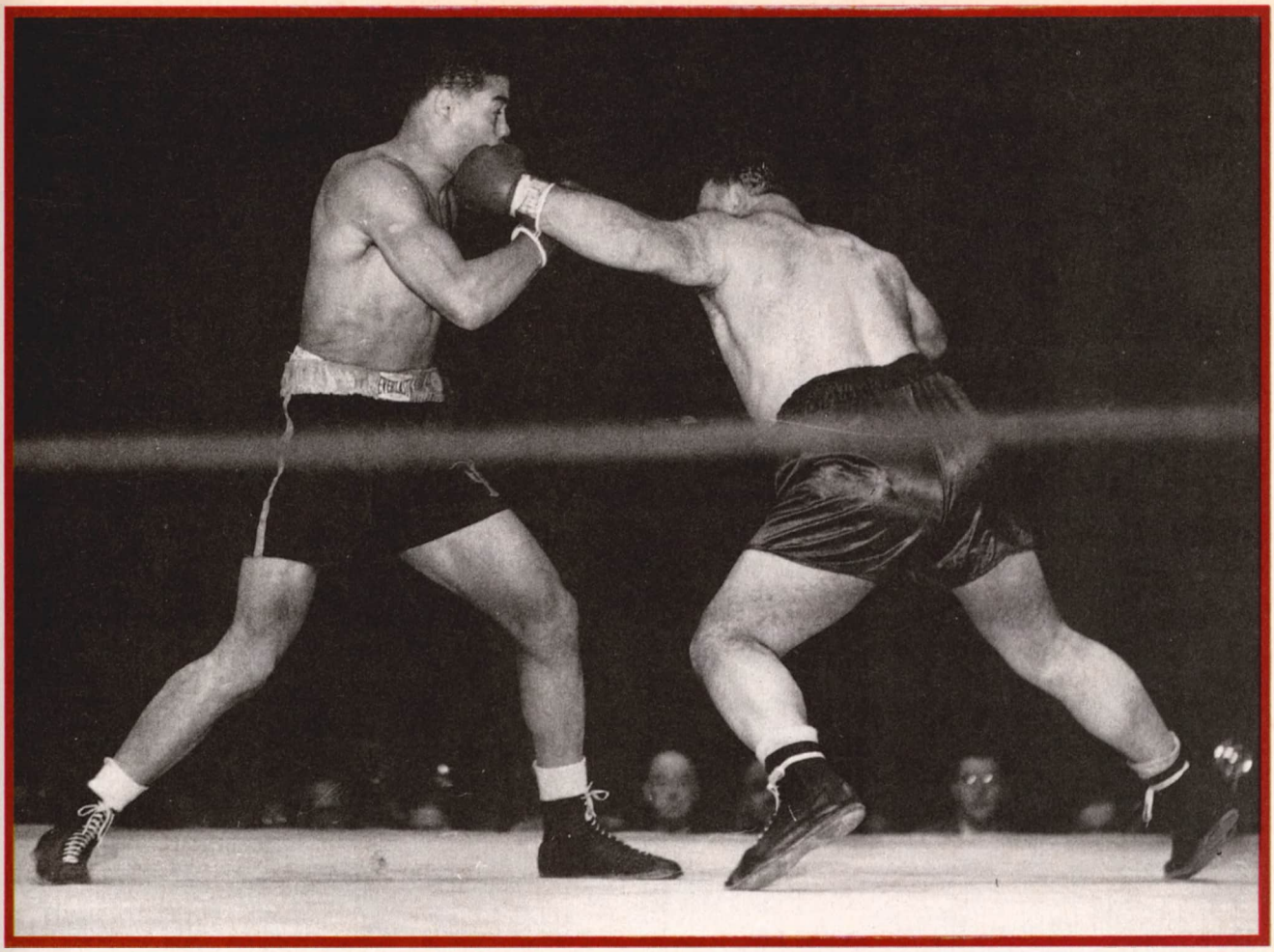
Galento lost the fight, as had been predicted, but he proved to me, and to others who had been unkind to him in the pre-battle writeups, that he was a good opponent for the best champion of recent years. Galento, pudgy, roly-poly, barrel-shaped, instead of dropping from the first well-directed punch, as was the general expectation, stood his ground and fought back viciously in an exhibition that had not been surpassed since Dempsey was punched through the ropes by Firpo.

What is more, the challenger almost swept the all-conquering "The Brown Bomber," the invincible superman of the ring, off his feet in the first round, dropped him with a terrific left hook to the jaw in the third, and for a few moments had the title of Louis hanging by a thread. "Two-Ton Tony" came within a hair's breadth of winning the world heavyweight crown.





Although Joe Louis (left) retained the world heavyweight crown, he got a much tougher fight than he expected from heavy-handed challenger Tony Galento (right). THE RING Editor Nat Fleischer considered it the most thrilling heavyweight title bout in more than 15 years.



When Galento rattled Louis with some big blows in the first round of their title fight, the 34,582 in attendance thought an upset might be in the works.

Had he been as well trained an athlete as Louis, had he taken the fighting game as seriously as the champion, a new titleholder would have been crowned. But condition told, and in the end, a battered, bruised Galento, blood flowing freely from nose, eyes, mouth, and from other cuts on the face, succumbed to a barrage seldom equaled.

Galento had taken a terrific beating, despite his brave stand and his knockdown of the champion. He was not counted out, but had he not been saved by the interference of referee Arthur Donovan as Galento fell against the ropes in his own corner, a helpless, semiconscious fighter, a fatality might have resulted. Thus the Louis-Galento fight ended as was forecast, with the challenger taking an unmerciful beating. But it furnished plenty of food for thought.

The bout proved that in Galento, Louis had faced a challenger far better than any of the men Joe had met since he dethroned Jimmy Braddock. I take my hat off to Galento for his brave, unflinching stand. He showed more fighting in three rounds than did Nathan Mann, Harry Thomas, Max Schmeling, John Henry Lewis, and Jack Roper combined. Galento didn't flash anything to brag about as a first-rate fighting man that should gain him a niche in the Hall of Fame. But he did exhibit the fearlessness of a true challenger—a fighting heart and a left hook packed with dynamite.

It was a thriller from start to finish. It was a breathtaking affair that kept the crowd in excitement from the clang of the first bell, and as such, it went far beyond expectations. That gathering had come to see how quickly Galento would be sent to the cleaners, but left with admiration for the underdog.

The mill was one of many surprises, most of which were furnished by the challenger. In the end, Louis stopped his man at 2:29 of the fourth round, but not before he had tasted the fourth knockdown of his professional career—two at the hands of Schmeling, one from Braddock.

The cart was almost upset in the first round when a left hook to the jaw, with Louis caught unawares, rocked the champion. His knees buckled and his face took on a look of astonishment, but he quickly gathered his senses and rushed into a clinch to avoid a knockdown. On several occasions after that punch, Louis felt the sting of Galento's wild swings or left hooks, but like the fighting champion he is, Louis stood his ground.

Galento had the titleholder wobbly, scared, terror-stricken as it seemed, but only for a moment. Then Louis unleashed the bombardment that convinced even the most skeptical of the champion's greatness.

The "suckers" who were warned not to expect a fight shrieked with delight when the tide turned in favor of the underdog. They stood on the chairs and cut loose with shouting such as is witnessed only on occasions when the "despised" challenger suddenly comes through.

It was the type of excitement that rent the air when "The Wild Bull Of The Pampas"

THE RING RATINGS, September 1939

Sixto Escobar

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Joe Louis
1. Lou Nova
2. Bob Pastor
3. Tony Galento
4. Tommy Farr
5. Max Schmeling
6. Roscoe Toles
7. Maurice Strickland
8. Johnny Paychek
9. Red Burman
10. Jack Roper

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: John Henry Lewis
1. Billy Conn
2. Melio Bettina
3. Gus Lesnevich
4. Len Harvey
5. Jock McAvoy
6. Dave Clark
7. Adolf Heuser
8. Frank Zamoris
9. Tiger Jack Fox
10. Oscar Rankins

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Al Hostak
2. Fred Apostoli
3. Ceferino Garcia
4. Ossie Stewart
5. Teddy Yarosz
6. Ken Overlin
7. Erich Seelig
8. Ron Richards
9. Walter Woods
10. Ben Brown

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Henry Armstrong
1. Fritzie Zivic
2. Ernie Roderick
3. Jimmy Leto
4. Sammy Luftspring
5. Pedro Montanez
6. Holman Williams
7. Kenny La Salle
8. Marcel Cerdan
9. Steve Mamakos
10. Milt Aron

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Henry Armstrong
1. Lou Ambers
2. Davey Day
3. Sammy Angott
4. Wesley Ramey
5. Eric Boon
6. Bob Montgomery
7. George Crouch
8. Paul De Bello
9. George Zengaras
10. Johnny Bellus

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Joey Archibald
1. Simon Chavez
2. Dave Castilloux
3. Pete Scalzo
4. Leo Rodak
5. Jackie Wilson
6. Chalky Wright
7. Harry Jeffra
8. Joey Silva
9. Johnny Cusick
10. Billy Passan

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Sixto Escobar
1. George Pace
2. K.O. Morgan
3. Peter Kane
4. Kui Kong Young
5. Lou Salica
6. Tommy Burns
7. Little Pancho
8. Aurel Toma
9. Kid Tanner
10. Baby Yack

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Little Dado
2. Tiny Bostock
3. Jackie Jurich
4. Small Montana
5. Enrico Urbinati
6. Eric Jones
7. Jackie Paterson
8. Paddy Ryan
9. Pierre Louis
10. Raoul Degryse

put Dempsey into the laps of the newspapermen; when Max Schmeling battered the "superfighter" Louis into submission; and when Ritchie Mitchell had the great Benny Leonard on the verge of a knockout at Ann Morgan's famous benefit show. The thrill of thrills in boxing.

"Louis has seen his best days," yelled one of the ringside scribes as Joe sprawled over the canvas.

"He has passed his peak," said another.

"Superman!" sneered a sports editor.

The champion must have heard some of those ringside gibes, judging by his great performance in the fourth and final round. His pride must have suffered considerably by that tumble.

The bell sounded for the fourth session. Louis raced out of his corner with a look of determination on his face. His eyes were forced on his prey. The astonishment that was so strongly painted on his features when he was floored had disappeared. There was fire in those shining eyes of his. He was out to settle accounts. He was ready to avenge the many insults he had suffered at the hands of the challenger, including the latest one—that left hook to the jaw that had crashed him to the floor.

Galento came out to meet him with little

After being rocked in the first round, Louis came back to score a knockdown in the second. While Louis showed a questionable chin in the Galento fight, he also showed excellent recuperative powers, always battling back effectively after finding trouble.

to offer. He had shot his bolt in that third session. Condition was now the primary factor. One, the champion, had it; the other, the challenger, had spent his energy in the first three rounds, and only a miracle would now hold him up.

There was murder in the heart of Louis as he cut loose with a bombardment far greater than he had hurled at Schmeling when he conquered the Teuton in the first round in that same stadium. Lefts and rights to body and head, left smashes to a battered face, a breathtaking right to the mouth that spilled blood across the ring—that was the start of the finish for poor Galento.

A hail of relentless blows, the impact of which could be heard across the arena, soon had Galento groggy. Galento, inspired by his showing in the previous round, came forth to meet the attack with counterpunches, but they couldn't land. They were either short of the mark, or else were parried by the fighting, furious titleholder. The challenger, despite the barrage, was still unafraid, until a left to the mouth cut his lips more deeply and rocked him from head to heels.

Louis, defeat turned into triumph, was unmerciful. Blow after blow landed with telling effect. Rocking hooks, jarring lefts, powerful body uppercuts—they all were rapidly reducing the Jersey challenger to a state of helplessness. There wasn't a moment of idleness in that session for the Bomber, who was bent on ending it then and there.

Louis drilled hooks and crosses by the loadful into Galento's midsection. It was a veritable shower of punches, each of which carried T.N.T. If anyone could say after that great comeback that Joe Louis is not a great titleholder, one of the best heavyweights of all-time, then he had better have his head examined.

The Jersey tavern keeper now had become an open target. Each succeeding wallop brought more blood, more cuts, made the challenger more helpless. Tony tried hard to ward off the blows, but without avail. His resistance was now nil. It was a case of sheer butchery. Dripping with blood, he presented a sorry sight.

He finally was able to toss his arms around his attacker, and momentarily staved off further punishment. But Joe threw his rival off. With vision gone from blood and cuts, puffing like an old nag from the terrible body attack, the slaughter was resumed by Louis.

The crowd had now seen enough. Even Galento's most ardent followers, those who packed the grandstand and cheered his every move, were now ready to call a halt.

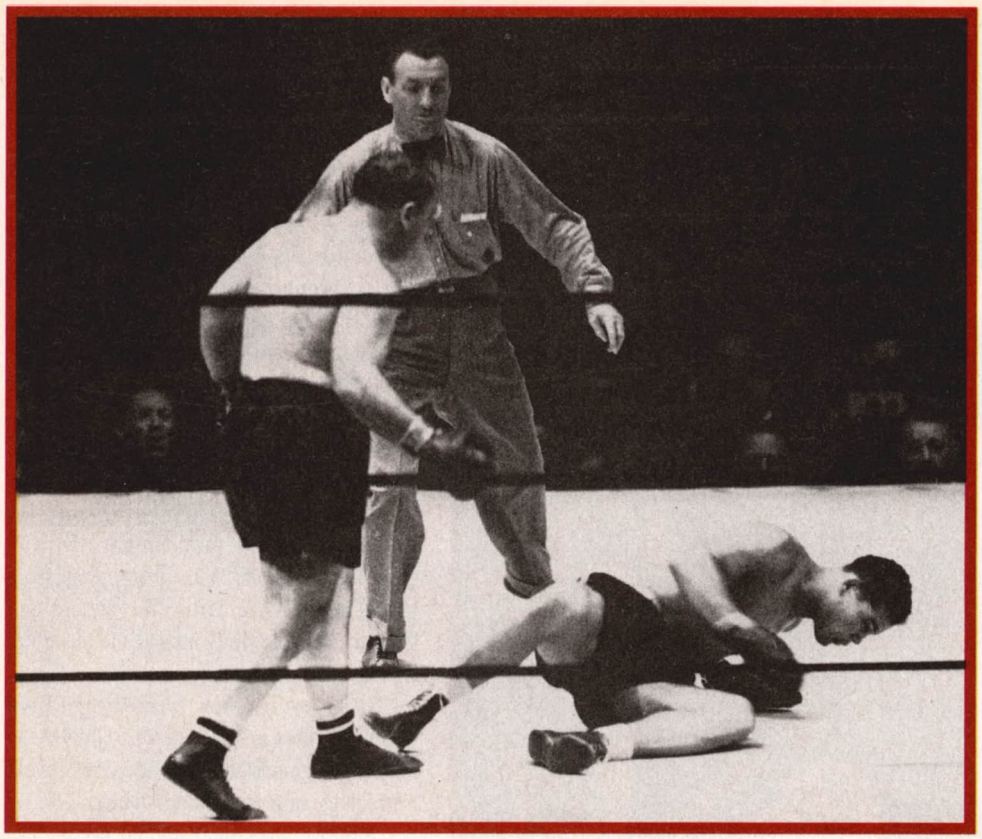
"Stop it!" they shouted, and like a flash the cry was taken up throughout the ringside. "Too much is plenty," the fans figured, and all hands were willing to admit the champion's mastery without going any farther.

Galento's face was unrecognizable as Louis shot over a left hook. Galento lurched forward, seeking protection near the ropes in his own corner. A right to the jaw spun Tony completely around. Lefts and rights to the midsection doubled him. A powerful left to the jaw almost sent the challenger out of the ring.

The Brown Bomber rushed forward. His left was cocked for the finishing touch. He had cornered his prey and was now ready to end it.

But Arthur Donovan was more merciful. He had been eyeing Galento carefully, and as Tony began to fall while leaning against the ropes, head drooping and body ready to cave, Donovan rushed forward, grabbed Galento under the armpits, and the fight was over. Thus Galento, for the fourth time in his long career, lost through a technical knockout, if one might call it so, because there was no count.

There was no need for a count. Galento had been dropped in this fight for the first time in his career, in the second round, and now again he was sinking to the canvas. He was dragged to his corner by frantic seconds.



In the third, Galento shockingly dropped the champ with a left hook to the jaw. For a few moments, it looked like Louis' heavyweight title was hanging by a thread, with "Two-Ton Tony" poised to become the unlikely champion.

It took more than five minutes to revive him. He was out to the world so far as fighting was concerned, and the champion again had successfully defended his crown.

For Louis the triumph was sweet, even though he had suffered the ignominy of a knockdown. He had avenged himself on the man who had belittled him for more than a year. He had proved to his challenger that, far from being a "bum and a tramp," Louis was one of the best fighters in the annals of the sport, despite several shortcomings.

He had bettered the record for title defenses, by winning his seventh bout since taking the crown, Tommy Farr, Mann, Thomas, Schmeling, Lewis, and Roper being his previous victims. He had rolled up an all-time record for defending his title so often in so short a space of time and he had gained his sixth consecutive knockout out of seven tries as champion.

There is a record of a true champion! When one points to the knockdown of Louis to belittle his ability, he shouldn't forget the knockdown of Dempsey by Firpo, Tunney by Dempsey, Corbett by Fitzsimmons, Jeffries by Johnson, or Sullivan by Corbett—fighters who are rated as immortals in ring history.

The third round, the one in which the miracle almost happened, Louis had been giving his man a thorough trouncing when suddenly, as they were parting out of a clinch, Galento snaked over the left hook that downed the titleholder.

Galento was as much surprised at the turn of affairs as was his victim. He couldn't follow up that punch. He was all in himself, and when he did get going again, it was too late.

Louis had regained his composure and was full of fight again. Tony's wide open rushing invited a fiery attack from the champion, who ripped many hard blows to body and jaw, but the rally was insufficient to win the round for him. It was Galento's session. Tony had shot his bolt. His bid for victory was over.

The challenger who wasn't given a chance was now the prey of the champion. The end was in sight—that was evident right after Louis had gotten off the floor. The champion's assault in the last few seconds of the third session was continued throughout the fourth round, with the result already noted.

Galento had given his best. He had furnished the spectators with ample proof that the faith he had in himself, a faith ridiculed by myself and thousands of other fight followers, was not misplaced.

He had promised to thrill the spectators. He had predicted that if "Tony's left hook landed, the champion would hit the canvas." He had vowed that the fans would not see a terrified, shaking, helpless challenger face the invincible champion.

On most of his promises Galento made good. We hope that the splendid performance he gave against Louis will enable him to reap a rich reward.

An analysis of the fight shows that Louis is not invincible, as we previously thought, but who among great fighters was? Name one if you can. The contest proved several points that hitherto were in dispute. Here are a few items worth recording as a result of the Galento-Louis mill:

1. Joe Louis can be hit.

2. Joe Louis loses confidence in himself when hard hit. An element of fear gets the better of him when he is hurt. Joe becomes somewhat panicky when in distress.

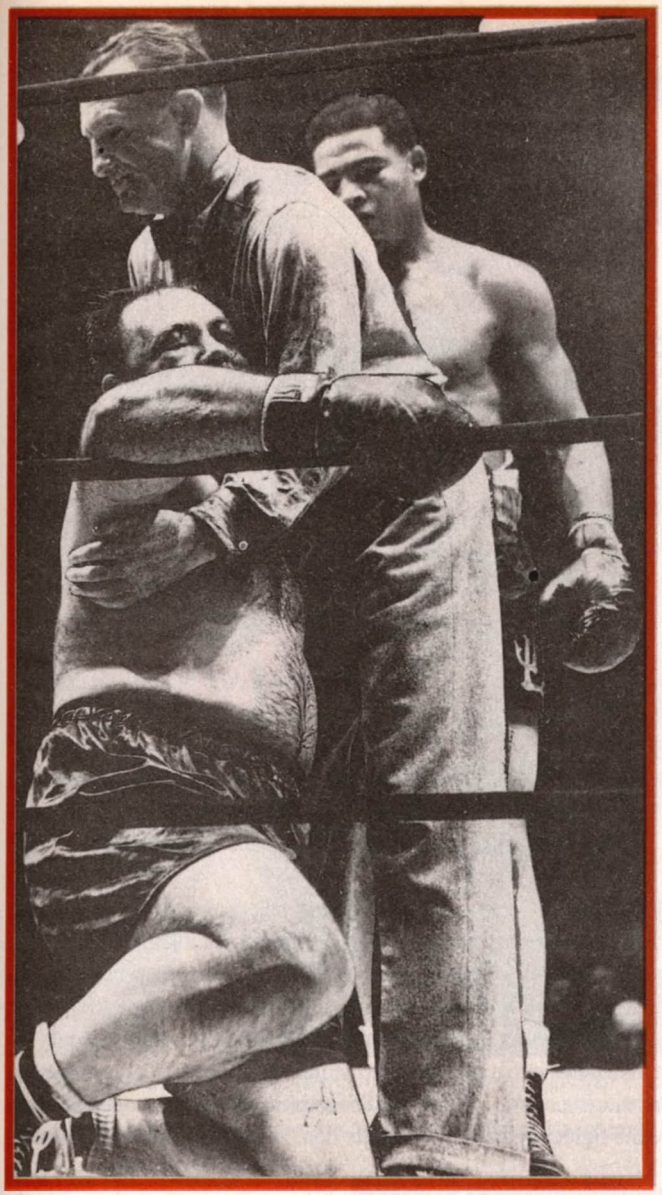
3. Any fighter who will go out and slug away with Joe, provided such an opponent possesses a powerful, jolting sock, has a fine chance to upset the champion, as did Galento.

4. Joe Louis finds it difficult to avoid a left hook when tossed from a crouching position.

5. The style adopted by Galento, the crouch, will be used by other opponents who might now face Joe, because it proved so effective in the Galento contest. It is a style that befuddles the champion, whose hitting power is best and at its greatest against a stand-up target.

6. The champion is as game as fighters come. He may not be equipped physically to take it as readily as did Dempsey, but any man who can come up from a knockdown such as Joe suffered in his bout with Galento, to end the bout in his favor in the most savage attack seen in a heavyweight championship in years, can have my dough riding on him for valor.

7. He is the hardest hitter of recent years and must depend more on that than any other to win his bouts. All fighters go down when hit hard enough. Dempsey, and those who preceded him, could testify to that. Hence,



The fight finally ended when referee Arthur Donovan interceded on Galento's behalf at 2:29 of the fourth round. Had Donovan waited much longer, Galento might not have escaped with his health intact.

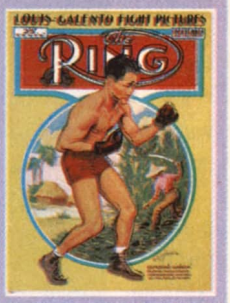
why ridicule the Brown Bomber with statements that he can't take it? He can, but probably not so well as did Jack, a weakness that Louis balances in his favor with the power of the punch.

***

ADDENDUM: Despite all the flaws he showed against Galento, Louis went on to successfully defend the heavyweight title 18 more times. The Brown Bomber's 25 world title defenses still stands as a record today. Galento, meanwhile, bounced back with a 14th-round knockout win over Lou Nova in a savage bout three months later, but followed that up with consecutive stoppage losses to Max and Buddy Baer. Galento fought just once more after that, a first-round knockout of Herbie Katz in June '43, and retired from the ring at age 33.

[Correction: The addendum following "THE RING Classic" in the July 2004 issue erroneously stated that Jimmy Ellis lost a 12-round decision to Muhammad Ali in 1971, when in fact the defeat came by 12th-round TKO.] ■

THE RING, September 1939

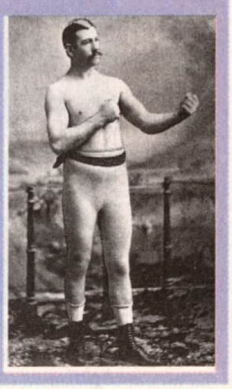


***The Cover*:** Middleweight Ceferino Garcia was being mentioned with Filipino immortals like Pancho Villa in his drive toward the vacant middleweight title. Garcia allegedly made a blood oath at the casket of Villa, vowing to win a world championship. "I'll carry on for him—do even bigger things," Garcia said, in reference to the former flyweight champion.

***How Good Is Joe?*:** Even all-time greats were questioned in their prime. Queries abounded as to how good Joe Louis was after he stopped Tony Galento in a surprisingly difficult fight. Some experts perceived a weakness in Louis, since Galento was able to knock down the defending champion in the third round.

***British Invasion*:** Lightweight and welterweight world champion Henry Armstrong made a triumphant return from England, where he successfully defended the welterweight title against Ernie Roderick by 15-round decision. Armstrong was following in the tradition of greats such as George Dixon and Philadelphia Jack O'Brien, who also went to England to defend their titles.

***No Conn Job*:** Billy Conn won the light heavyweight championship with a unanimous 15-round decision over Melio Bettina at Madison Square Garden. Conn took the title, vacated by John Henry Lewis, by using his masterful skills and sharp, accurate punching. Bettina tried crouching, hooking, and charging, all to no avail.



***The Magical John L.*:** THE RING looked back at heavyweight great John L. Sullivan, covering many tales of his fabled life. One involved a story in which Sullivan stopped a parade being held in his honor to raise money for the widow of a fallen policeman, signing newspapers for $10 a copy.

THE FIGHT DOCTOR

A BOXER'S TOUGHEST DECISION

By Margaret Goodman, MD

The issue of a boxer's retirement is difficult to discuss and even more difficult to act upon. As boxing fans, we seem to have an intuitive feel as to when a fighter should hang up his gloves. Oftentimes, this feeling involves fighters we have watched for years who show a decline in skill as they age and take punishment. In other instances, it may involve a boxer's inability to articulate his words.

But is something as arbitrary as a feeling fair, legal, and appropriate? And whose responsibility is it to decide when it's time for a boxer to quit the ring? Who knows best? What criteria should be utilized?

Many believe retirement should be mandatory after a certain age or a certain history. However, retirement solely on the basis of age is illegal and discriminating. Ring age is a different story, and refers to a fighter who has lost his legs or his skills, or shows the ill effects of having been through too many wars.

Sadly, retirement is just another poorly regulated issue, partly because there are no exact answers. Moreover, memories are often short, especially if a fighter is still marketable.

When an NBA player can no longer score enough points or pull down enough rebounds, he is benched. But when a well-known fighter slows down, he may actually become more marketable. His name will sell tickets, boost TV ratings, and look good on a young up-and-comer's record.

The typical boxer's mindset also plays into a reluctance to retire. These are fiercely competitive people who are energized by the entire spectrum of boxing. The training camp is a wonderful back-to-the-womb experience, where the fighter is the center of attention. Numerous handlers constantly stroke his ego. He is called "champ," even though he lost the title many years ago. He is provided with convenient excuses: He was "robbed" in his last decision or the referee stopped the fight too soon, so that loss didn't *really* count. It's little wonder that a lot of fighters are in denial when it comes time to step away.

PHOTO BY NASSER KHAN

Meldrick Taylor was already way past his prime in 1994 when he suffered his second TKO defeat at the hands of Julio Cesar Chavez (pictured). But the two-division former titleholder was still fighting as recently as 2002, having passed his prefight neurological exams.

I frequently hear, "Fighter X looked so bad in his last fight. Put him through some tests, and then you guys can stop him from fighting." Medical tests, however, are not the complete answer. Sure, if a boxer fails his MRI, or cannot walk a straight line in front of the neurologist, the decision is easy. Sadly, by that time, it is usually too late.

Equally as sad is that more

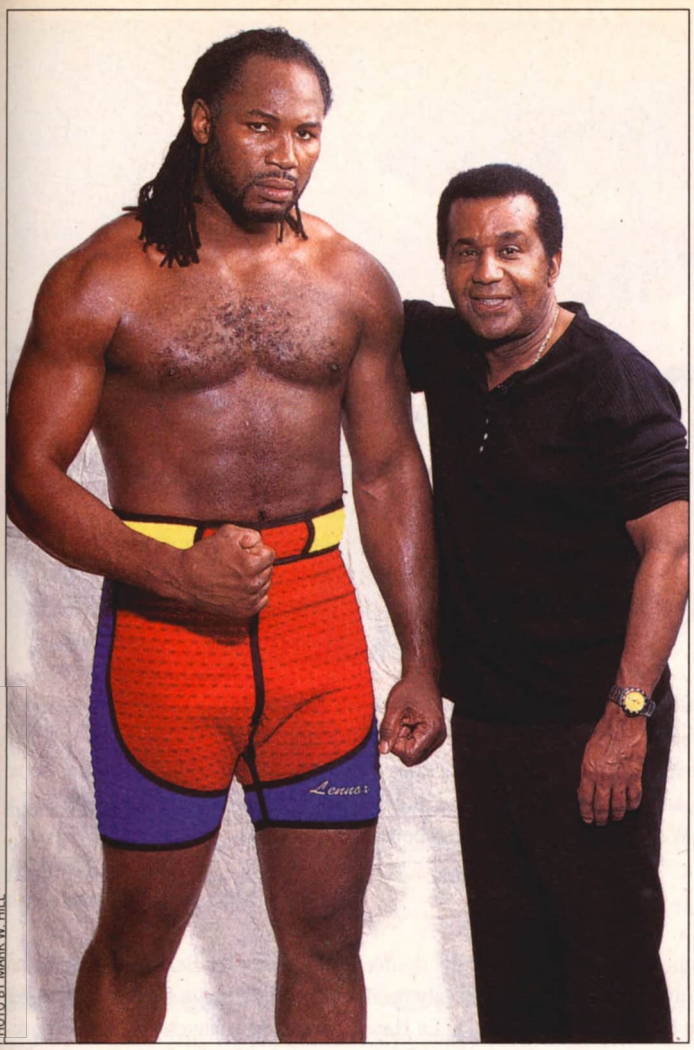


PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Emanuel Steward, pictured with now-retired heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis, believes it is a trainer's responsibility to tell his fighters when it's time to hang up the gloves. Steward says the trainer can see things others can't.

often than not, a damaged fighter can pass the prefight medical tests, especially if the doctor has no comparison exams with which to judge. For example, former junior welterweight and welterweight titleholder Meldrick Taylor, although unable to express himself clearly, was cleared to fight by a neurologist before he fought eight rounds against Dillon Carew in Alabama on May 31, 2002. It was not an isolated incident. Former junior middleweight beltholder Vincent Pettway could barely climb the ring steps the night he was stopped by Luis Rosado in Baltimore, Maryland, on August 31, 2001.

So if impaired fighters such as Taylor and Pettway can slip through the medical screening process, how can we base retirement entirely on tests?

Usually, those closest to a fighter should help him or her make the decision. Hall of Fame trainer certainly Emanuel Steward feels it is his responsibility.

"The trainer can see things no one else can see," said Steward. "It is unrealistic to expect the fighter to retire on his own. Many fighters will have financial problems at the end of their career, and have no pension.

"Some of the signs telling me a fighter should retire include looking at the legs, more than the punches. Can he still move in and out? Has he lost equilibrium, balance, and coordination? Sometimes you don't hear the slurring of their speech until after they have retired. But as a trainer, I may notice they are taking longer to grasp information."

Steward feels that if the fighter will not listen, the trainer should go to the appropriate commission.

Nevada State Athletic Commission Chief Deputy Attorney General Keith Kizer states it is up to the commission to determine whether to grant an application to box.

"The Commission can exercise such discretion because a license to box is a privilege, not a right," said Kizer. "They review the applicant's general suitability, character, integrity, and ability to participate or engage in or be associated with boxing contests. They may deny an application or may grant a limited, restricted, or conditional license for any cause deemed sufficient by the Commission."

From a regulator's standpoint, objective criteria should be utilized in recommending retirement whenever possible. One way is to categorize fighters. In Nevada, when a fighter has reached 36 years of age, competed in more than 425 professional rounds, or not competed for at least 36 consecutive months, they cannot be approved without coming before the commission. On an individual basis, the Medical Advisory Board can require additional testing, and the commission can take into account the fighter's ring experience, including losses, knockouts, and medical suspensions.

Dr. Flip Homansky, Nevada State Athletic Commissioner and Association of Boxing Commissions (ABC) vice president, presented the Boxing Severity Index (BSI) at the ABC's 2003 meeting in St. Louis, Missouri. The BSI is a scoring system to identify fighters that are at increased risk and should be looked at by commissions closely before licensing. Criteria include the fighter's ring age (based on both professional and amateur records), frequency and number of losses, and number of knockout losses. The BSI system is a first step toward uniformity when granting a boxing license, and by extension, determining when a boxer should retire.

Unfortunately, many states are without adequate financing and staff to perform the necessary functions to recommend a fighter retire. But according to Dr. Homansky, there is also a more simplistic way of looking at the problem: "A fighter should consider retirement when, 1) He has enough money; 2) It hurts the week after a fight, rather than just the day after; 3) He gets hit by more punches than he throws; and 4) The trunks he is wearing have more blood on them than his opponent's face."

Unhappily, there are those who adopt a fatalistic approach to boxing, and assume that anyone who becomes a fighter has to accept the consequences, including chronic brain injury or worse.

I have never subscribed to that philosophy, and believe we have to accept our responsibility and maintain a conscience. For a trainer, it is to be honest with your boxer; for a commission, it is to stand up and say "no" when it is clear a fighter has had enough; and for a fan, it is to praise a boxer when he finally backs away to pursue other endeavors. ■

Dr. Goodman will be happy to answer questions about the medical aspects of boxing in future columns. Please send inquiries to: The Fight Doctor, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

OSCAR OUTRAGE

Where is the outrage over the decision Oscar De La Hoya was awarded over Felix Sturm? Unlike most of Oscar's other fights, where a case can be made that the decision could have gone either way (Ike Quartey, Pernell Whitaker, Felix Trinidad), Sturm clearly beat De La Hoya, but the judges still gave it to Oscar. Even De La Hoya knew he didn't win the fight. It was a blatant move to keep Oscar's big money fight with Bernard Hopkins alive. Judging fights should be about deciding a true winner, not about keeping big money fights alive.

JAKE DAVIS
Plainfield, NJ

I just can't understand how the judges scored the bout 115-113 for Oscar De La Hoya. I scored it 116-112 for Felix Sturm. I also couldn't understand what Bernard Hopkins meant when he said that Oscar proved he won't get tired in the final rounds for their September fight. Against Sturm, Oscar looked tired in the last rounds, and fought just like he did in the rematch with Shane Mosley. But De La Hoya is right about one thing: We've all seen him perform better in other bouts.

MICHAEL DEALBA
Mikedealba20@yahoo.com

Like millions of other boxing fans, I too watched the doubleheader featuring Bernard Hopkins and Oscar De La Hoya. All I can say is that boxing must really need a big money draw, because the judges in the De La Hoya-Felix Sturm bout had blinders on. De La Hoya was clearly beaten by Sturm, who, according to CompuBox, landed 234 punches compared to 188 for De La Hoya. Oscar doesn't belong up where he is, and everyone will see that when he fights Hopkins.

DAN HARDER
Griffith, IN

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Oscar De La Hoya's decision over Felix Sturm was unpopular with many fans, most of whom seem to think the nod should have gone the other way. Readers Jake Davis, Michael Dealba, and Dan Harder are among readers who wrote to complain about what they perceive as a hometown decision in Oscar's favor.

THE FUTURE IS GREEN

I would just like to tell the world that the next five or so years are going to be dominated by Irish boxers. The ones to look out for are Michael Gomez, a super featherweight on a hot streak; Bernard Dunne, the next world featherweight champion; John Duddy, an up-and-coming junior middleweight; and Thomas McDonagh, who is already the best junior middle in Europe. Then

The Irish are coming! Encouraged by the success of Irish fighters such as Michael Gomez, pictured flattening Alex Arthur last October, reader James Byrne believes his countrymen are on the brink of taking over several divisions.

there's 19-year-old middleweight Andy Lee, who will be competing at the Olympics. He has already won a European bronze this year and is a pound-for-pound star of the future no doubt.

JAMES BYRNE
Dublin, Ireland

INTRODUCTORY OVERKILL

Why is it that every big pay-per-view that Mike Buffer announces, he has to tell a story about the fighter before announcing him? We already know all about the fighters; that's why we paid $50 to watch them fight. Mr. Buffer, keep it simple, like Jimmy Lennon Jr. does.

JEREMY GUERRIERI
Concord, OH

ANOTHER VOTE FOR GATTI

With so much controversy in "Come Out Writing" about Arturo Gatti's Hall of Fame worthiness, we should look at the subject from one more angle, and compare Gatti to a so-called Hall shoo-in like Oscar De La Hoya. True, Gatti does not have the natural talent or the pretty record of De La Hoya, but Oscar could easily have as many losses as Gatti when you take into account the close decisions that have gone in his favor, especially with controversial wins over Pernell Whitaker and more recently Felix Sturm.

The biggest fights of Oscar's career have all ended in controversy because after eight rounds Oscar runs. Has Gatti ever run? Does he call for an investigation after being on the losing end of a bad decision? Has he ever ducked an opponent because the risk was not worth the reward? Arturo Gatti represents what boxing can be at its best, and he brings more class to the sport than anyone I can think of. In an era where fighters are not willing to take chances and trade shots, Gatti is a breath of fresh air.

JEFF WOLFORD
Glendale, AZ

PROTECTED IN POLAND?

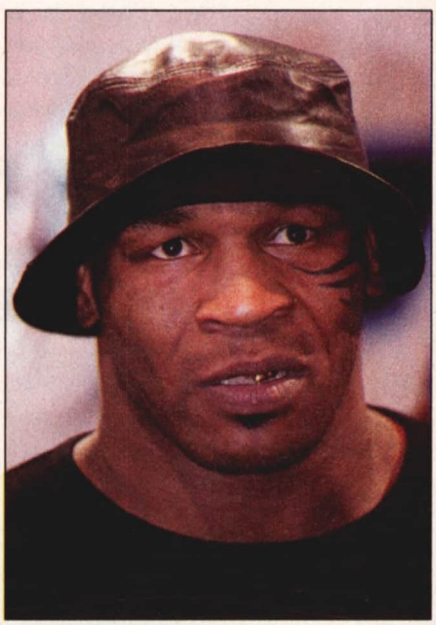
Recently, I've become involved in boxing promotion and organization. I'm working with Boxing Europe, formerly known as Panix Europe. I'd like to tell you about a great prospect, Tomasz Adamek. I saw his name mentioned in the July 2004 issue ("The State Of The Game"), but you labeled him the "Most Protected" among light heavyweights. I assure you that in the next year Adamek will be world champion. Keep an eye out for him.

KONRAD BOROWIECKI
Warsaw, Poland

FORGET TYSON!

I find it depressing that greedy, parasitic promoters, eager journalists, and naive fans salivate at the prospect of the return of Mike Tyson. They are haunted by a memory of what he used to be, but oblivious to the fact that very little of that athlete remains. They are shoving Tyson toward another brutal drubbing. He cannot successfully compete with the upper echelon of the heavyweight hierarchy, and his position among the second tier is questionable. Tyson has drastically deteriorated physically as well as mentally. His skills are exhausted, and there is nothing left except for a punch and a prayer. Out of the ring, Tyson seems to have adopted Battling Siki as a role model. Are we destined to watch him unravel and self-destruct?

JAMES MOORE
Reading, PA



Not everybody is excited about Mike Tyson's latest comeback. Reader James Moore is unenthusiastic about the prospect of watching the former heavyweight champion beat up handpicked fodder or get clobbered by the division's elite.

HAROLD vs. THE HEAVIES

When did Harold Johnson fight Nino Valdes, and what other top heavyweights did Johnson fight and what year did he fight them?

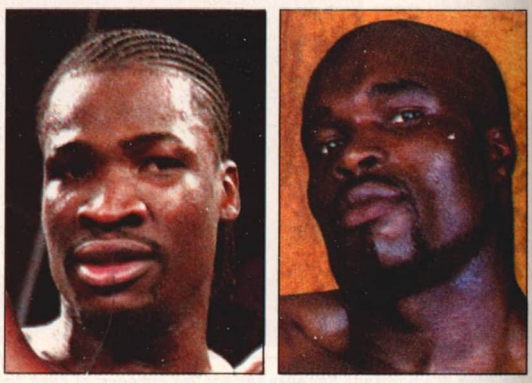
KENNETH BANKS
Austin, TX

[Editor's note: Prior to winning the world light heavyweight title in 1962, Johnson fought a number of heavyweights, including Valdes, whom he decisioned in November 1952. Other top heavies Johnson fought include Arturo Godoy (W 10) in '49, Jersey Joe Walcott (KO by 3) in '50, and Ezzard Charles (W 10) in '53.] ■

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

FOR CONTROL OF THE CRUISERS



Braithwaite-Mormeck: Winner becomes first RING cruiser champ

In April 2003, **James Toney** and **Vassiliy Jirov** breathed life into the much-maligned cruiserweight division. With the two of them sharing the ring, this bastard, 'tweener weight class mattered.

But only for a moment. Both fighters soon moved up and became heavyweight contenders, leaving the 200-pound class behind.

On October 2, however, the cruiserweight division will matter once again. The top two fighters in the division as ranked by THE RING (and by most any knowledgeable boxing observer), **Wayne Braithwaite** and **Jean-Marc Mormeck**, will compete for recognition as the *real* world champion by meeting at Madison Square Garden on the undercard of the **Felix Trinidad-Ricardo Mayorga** match. They aren't huge names or ticketsellers, but hardcore fans know it's an explosive matchup—and one that will bring order and importance to the often irrelevant cruiserweight division.

"This will be the beginning of big things in my career," confident Frenchman Mormeck told THE RING through an interpreter. "It means a lot for me and for France. I think that I will be the first to defeat Braithwaite. He's a good fighter, but he won't be the strongest I've ever faced. After I saw him fight [against Louis Azille in April], I knew he was not the strongest."

Whether Mormeck makes good on his promise or not—and it sure looks like a 50-50 fight on paper, with Mormeck the more durable fighter, but Braithwaite rangier and more athletic—the winner will most likely move on to a showdown with another of the division's top fighters, **Kelvin Davis**. All three cruisers are promoted by **Don King**, making this mini-tournament easy to put together.

"The Mormeck camp is very excited for this opportunity," said Mormeck's attorney, **Gil Feder**. "I am confident that Jean-Marc will defeat Braithwaite, but I don't expect it to be easy. I expect this to be a grueling, very exciting fight."

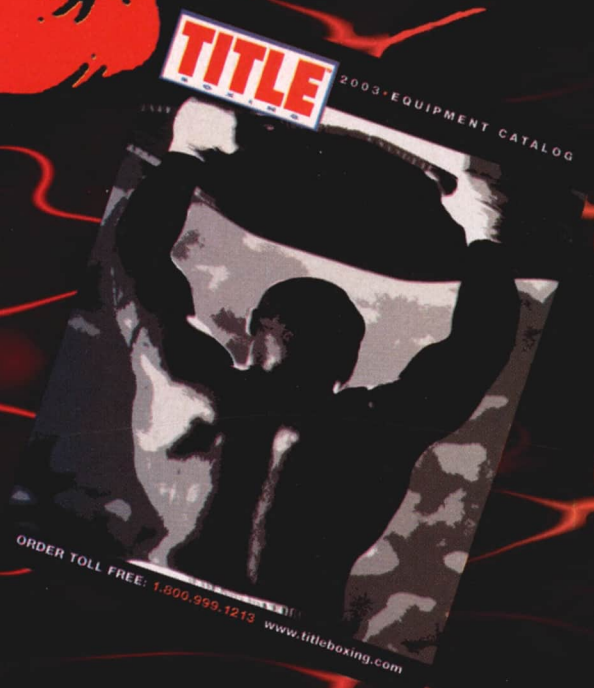
As do we. If you have any pay-per-view money left over after September 18, October 2 is shaping up as a good excuse for spending it.

LISTEN UP

It seemed like a bummer for hardened, hard-luck veteran **Glencoffe Johnson** when **Joe Calzaghe** kept postponing their fight. Some bummer: Had Johnson fought Calzaghe and lost, it would have cost the 35-year-old the cool $1-million he'll earn on September 25 as **Roy Jones'** comeback opponent on HBO. Still, Johnson's promoter, **Dan Goossen**, does view the Calzaghe backouts as a downer. "We felt very, very confident Glencoffe was going to beat Calzaghe," Goossen said, "and it would have been better to negotiate with Jones coming off a win than coming off a cancellation. But I really take a lot of pride in making Glencoffe Johnson this kind of money at this age." For Jones, picking Johnson follows the predictable pattern. He chose not to face a heavyweight, nor to go straight into a rubber match with **Antonio Tarver**, but rather to go after an alphabet trinket against a fighter he's assuredly confident he'll defeat ... It looks like Showtime's September 4 date is going to Don King, and new King matchmaker **Eric Bottjer** told THE RING that welterweight champ **Cory Spinks** is expected to headline. Heavyweight **Lamon Brewster** will probably fight in the co-feature on the Mandalay Bay card ... We reported last issue that the **Winky Wright-Shane Mosley** rematch would take place in November. Now we have the exact date and site: November 20, at Mandalay Bay ... There have been rumors of featherweights **Manny Pacquiao** and **Juan Manuel Marquez** each taking interim fights before engaging in a rematch (Pacquiao in his native Philippines, Marquez against mandatory challenger **Orlando Salido**), but Top Rank publicist **Lee Samuels** told us his inclination is that they'll go straight to the rematch instead. Let's hope he's right. ■

Jones: The comeback begins against Johnson

TITLE
BOXING



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